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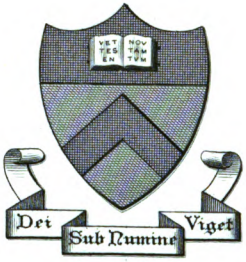

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A

WALK ABOUT ZION,

REVISED AND ENLARGED.

BY REV. JOHN A. CLARK, D. D.,

RECTOR OF SAINT ANDREWS' CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA; AUTHOR OF "THE PASTOR'S TESTIMONY."

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark y well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generations following.' – *Ps* xlviii. 12, 13.

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PREFACE.

At no period since the reformation, have christians appeared so fully to understand the obligation that rests upon them—resulting from that command of the Saviour, "*Preach the Gospel to every creature,*" as within the last twenty years. During this period great efforts have been made to establish the gospel at home and abroad. The Missionary has been sent forth, not only to Heathen lands, but to the destitute regions of our own country.

The Christian world were not aware of the alarming destitution of the means of grace that prevailed even in many of our older settlements, and in not a few of the country towns along the Atlantic border, until they began to address themselves to the business of exploring the land.

As these facts became more obvious, christians of every denomination felt that they had a duty to perform in relation to this matter.

It would have been wonderful if the ministers and members of the Episcopal Church had not sympathised in these efforts to evangelize the world—and supply the destitute regions of our own country with the means of grace, and the institutions of the gospel! They have not been altogether insensible to their duty in this matter. They have felt their hearts drawn in yearning tenderness not only towards the dying Pagan, but also towards the christless sinner in our own land. They have accordingly attempted to pitch the Tabernacle of the Lord in many destitute towns

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and sabbathless villages. But in many instances they found their efforts retarded and their operations embarrassed, by the towering prejudices that existed against the Episcopal Church.

The author at the time this volume was written, was connected with a missionary association, which was sustaining a number of heralds of the cross who were endeavoring to diffuse the blessings of the gospel through a very destitute region of country. The labors of our missionaries were signally owned and blessed of God. This awakened a desire in those communities where they labored for farther information in relation to the Episcopal Church.

Many who were prepossessed in favor of the church were nevertheless led to hesitate in reference to actually connecting themselves with it from the fact that they heard so many floating rumors derogatory to its character. The enquiry was therefore frequently made for a small work which would present a correct view of the leading doctrines of the church, and meet the popular objections urged against it. Both the author and his brethren looked around in vain for a work of this description, in which they had entire confidence—a work which should exhibit the peculiarities of the Episcopal Church, in connection with its *evangelical and spiritual character*, and at the same time, meet the objections raised aginst it, in a spirit of christian kindness and love.

The author was solicited to undertake to produce a work of this sort. After having consented to make the effort, and written to his Diocesan for counsel and assistance, he received the following response:

"Rev. and Dear Sir:

Yours of the 14th is just received, and it gives me pleasure to learn that you have consented to prepare, what cer-

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mainly we very much need, such a work for the press, as that which you mention. I should long since have attempted it myself, but for my being so much occupied with other duties. I shall gladly aid you in the work, should it be expedient. At the present time I am too much engaged, to prepare the essays you mention, but am willing that you should use any of my sermons for the purpose The one on John, iii. 5, is at your disposal &c.

With affection and esteem,

Your Friend and Brother,

ALEX. V. GRISWOLD.

The plan contemplated by the author, was to prepare the materials for this volume as opportunity presented, and then to mould them at leisure. But, very few of the materials were as yet collected for this projected work, when the author was unexpectedly made to see that it was his imperious duty to enter a new field of labour where it was certain he would find himself overwhelmed with increased and multiplied engagements. The plan of writing this volume therefore was at once abandoned. But as his transfer to that new field of labor was not as early by a few weeks as was at first anticipated, his friends again urged him to consecrate those few weeks to this work. He yielded to their importunity, and the following pages were the result of the undertaking. A large edition having rapidly passed from the publisher's hands, the author has been more confirmed in the opinion that a work of this sort was greatly needed. He has endeavored carefully to revise the present edition, although he is sensible that this volume will still be found in many respects far below the measure of excellence which it is desirable such a work should possess. The author's reliance for its success in doing good is entirely upon the blessing of God. To His grace the work is com-

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mended. If it be calculated to promote His glory, ma His eye follow it for good, and cause it to hang as a lamp on the walls of Zion, lighting the path of the heaven-bound pilgrim on his way to the celestial city.

It may not be improper here to remark, that an entire new chapter, on the subject of Christian Union, has been added to this work in the present edition. It is hoped that what has been offered on that subject, will be found to be in keeping with the other parts of this volume, and will tend to strengthen the bonds of affection between christians of different denominations, and draw more closely the ties of brotherly love.

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A WALK ABOUT ZION.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH.

"I love his Church,————
I love the Altar of my sires,
Old as my country's rocks of steel,
And as I feed its sacred fires,
The present Deity I feel."—CUNNINGHAM.

THE design of the present volume is not to furnish amusement to the gay, and the giddy. A walk is proposed. But it forms no part of our plan to lead the reader through the splendid fields of imagination and taste, or over verdant lawns and along the ambrosial walks of earthly pleasure. We hope we have some relish for the beauties of nature. We trust we are not altogether insensible to the charm of magnificent scenery. We love to stand upon the mountain peak, and behold the awful sublimities of creation that cluster around us in forms of Alpine grandeur. We love to descend the mountain side that overlooks some far spreading vale, which stretches with unwonted loveliness before the eye—traversed, through its whole extent, by a gently flowing, silvery stream, where in the distance, we can see bold uplands, covered with forests which wave their tops in the light breeze. We love to take some such commanding spot, from which we can gaze upon the surrounding landscape—watch the limpid waters that sparkle from the rock---hear the murmur of the bees in the still noon—observe the slow flight of the

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crane, or the upward movements and sublime steerage of the eagle, as he rises from the summit of the rocks and wings his way upward, till he appears like a dark speck in the sunlight. We love to be placed amid such a scene of enchantment, to inhale the aromatic scent that comes from the neighboring field, and quaff the fragrance of the balmy air—while the sound of distant voices, or notes of music, are borne floating on the breeze to our ear!

But it forms no part of our plan in this proposed walk, to conduct the reader forth to a survey of the scenes and beauties of nature. Still it is hoped that the walk, which we invite him to take along with us, will not be without interest.

The scenes through which we would conduct him are serious and grave. We desire him to contemplate along with us, objects and institutions that possess *moral* beauty. In this walk, we would have him fix his eye upon the foundation, and appendages, and beauty, and strength—upon the towers, and palaces, and bulwarks of a city which God himself has reared.

We would also have him observe its walls, upon which is written *Salvation*, and its gates, upon which is inscribed *Praise*.*

We ask him to stand with us beside,

> "————Siloa's brook that flows
> Fast by the oracles of God:"

and after having gazed there awhile, to walk thence to the holy mount, to survey *the city of the Great King—the city of our God in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion. God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*†

Come, then, along with us—*walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following.*

Or to drop this metaphoric language, we propose in this volume to direct the attention of the reader to certain facts, connected with the existence and constitution of the christian church, and especially that branch of it, in whose communion we have the happiness of being placed. This we purpose to

* Is. 60. 18. † Ps. 48. 2.

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do by means of a series of sketches, which we hope will be found to furnish faithful drawings and distinct views of the towers, and palaces, and bulwarks of the christian church.

Or, if the reader will allow us to return to our former metaphor, we propose to conduct him in our intended walk, gently and leisurely along from point to point, that he may catch here and there a view of the beauty, and strength, and safety of Zion, which is the church of the living God.

And as we walk on, I am sure we shall be able to begin that song of which the prophet speaks:—"In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city: Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

The melody and richness of this song, need not be impaired, nor its prolongued strains interrupted, by the noise and clangor of the arms of any of the militant forces, marshalled by the great "Captain of our salvation." Among the several religious denominations, which in our day compose "the mystical body of Christ"—"the sacramental host of God's elect," there need be no bitterness nor angry contention, whether Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim is the proper place of worship, as there was between the Samaritan and the Jew. The Saviour himself has settled that question. The true worshippers "worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

This is what all they who profess christianity are to look to—to see that they "worship the Father in spirit and in truth"—to see that they connect themselves with a branch of the church of the living God—that they pitch their tent within the walls of the "city of the Great King." This is the special duty and business of all christians, to see, *not* that *their neighbours'*, but that *their own* location is on Mount Zion—that themselves form a part of the inhabitants of that glorious city, of which it is said, "God is in the midst of her."

If all christians acted upon this principle, the apostolic precept would speedily be complied with, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another."

It does not form any part of the design of this volume to

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discuss the abstract question, '*What constitutes the Church?*' although the subject may be incidentally adverted to.

The very best answer that we have ever seen to that question, is contained in *the nineteenth* of *the thirty-nine articles* of the Anglican Church:—"The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

I am aware that a diversity of opinion prevails even among men of profound learning and devoted piety, in relation to what may with truth be denominated *the Church.*

It is the opinion of a portion of the christian world, that all the various religious sects, who hold the great essentials of christianity, though as associated bodies, they exist, under different and distinct organizations—and though they have connected with them more or less of error, and of human invention, are nevertheless essentially parts of the visible church of Christ.

There are others who think, that most obviously but one of these variant and conflicting organizations can be right, and that it would be sin and sacrilege in them, to give the slightest countenance to an ecclesiastical organization, that had not its origin in divine appointment. There can be no doubt but that men of real piety, and of most conscientious principles will be found, holding each of these theories.

It does not appear to the writer, however, at all necessary to agitate this question. The church with which he has the happiness of being connected, has shown most commendable moderation in saying nothing decisive upon this point.* Having determined in her view, what is conformable to primitive and apostolic order, she simply requires of those who minister at her altar, that they shall submit to that order.

The writer, in his christian intercourse with others, has found it adequate to all needful purposes, to take precisely the same ground.

When the question has been asked, "Do you advocate the idea, that your church alone is right, and that all other christian bodies, who do not possess the essential elements of your

* See Bp. White's Lectures on the Catechism, p. 425.

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ecclesiastical constitution, are guilty of innovation and schism?"—he has uniformly replied—"I have ample and satisfactory evidence that this church, of which I am a member, is constituted according to primitive order. In reference to the proposed question, my answer is, I have nothing to do with others. I wish all to act conscientiously. I dare not, I do not desire, to judge those who differ from us. For the Apostle has said—'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.' My business is to take care that *I* do not embrace error, and that I connect myself with a body of Christians, who are a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

It forms no inconsiderable part of the design of the present volume, to show ***that such a body of christians is found in the Episcopal Church.***

The writer, however, at the very outset, desires to premise two considerations.

First—that he designs to accomplish the object now proposed, in a sort of desultory way, principally by means of a series of sketches, which will illustrate the distinctive features, and different peculiarities of the Episcopal Church. And,

Secondly—that he hopes to do this in a way which, if this volume should chance to fall into the hands of those whose views are not in accordance with his own, will not be offensive to them, nor appear to bear any marks of heated sectarian zeal.—Most sincerely does he desire, in the execution of every part of this work, to be under the continual influence of that Holy Spirit, by which he, and his brethren who may dissent from these views, expect to be fitted to dwell together in sweet and everlasting communion in the presence of God and the Lamb.

The author takes this early opportunity to declare most distinctly, that he is thorough and entire in his attachment to the Episcopal Church. He believes it to be truly the Church of the Redeemer.

He has seen many things to wring his heart with sorrow in relation to the manner in which this eldest daughter of the

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reformation* has been treated. She has occupied, from a variety of causes, a singular position in this country. In many parts of the United States, the Episcopal Church has been looked upon somewhat in the light of one of the old and dilapidated Abbies, found here and there in European countries. The Protestant traveller who passes in their neighborhood, stops to contemplate the time-honored ruins, and, for a moment, feels rising within him an emotion of awe and veneration, but instantly experiences an abatement of that emotion from the recollection that these huge structures were the nursery of institutions that spread a baleful influence over the land, and were throughout Christendom, like a death shade to the Church of God. As he surveys these vast structures, and contemplates their size, and form, and appendages, he distinctly sees that they are the productions of a "by gone age," and totally unfit for modern use and occupancy!

Thus have many excellent christians looked upon our venerable Zion. So little have they known of the Episcopal Church, that they have supposed that it was "part and parcel" of the "mystical Babylon," embosoming almost every form of pestiferous error, and would be sure to exert a baleful influence wherever it was established.

Others who were too enlightened to embrace such absurd ideas, have nevertheless been so ignorant of the institutions of this Church, as to suppose that those institutions were not adapted to the present age, nor in harmony with the civil institutions of this country.

It is those who cherish these views, that we particularly desire should "*walk* with us *about Zion, and go round about her, and mark well her bulwarks and consider her palaces.*"

I must not here conceal the melancholy fact, that the members of the Episcopal Church themselves, have in many in-

* It is true that the Lutheran Church was organized, and, as an entire church, severed from Papal influence before the Church of England—the Church under Luther having been organized in 1521, and the entire and final separation of the Church of England from all subjection to Rome, having been consummated in 1536. But the reformation in the Church of England had actually commenced and made great progress among its members, nearly 200 years before. For in 1360, Wickliff commenced his attack upon the Mendicant orders, and soon after influenced Edward 3d, to resist the Pope's claim of homage, and was summoned before parliament to defend it.

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stances given strength to the prejudices and unfavourable opinion entertained of this church.

By departing from the spirit of the thirty-nine articles—yea, the spirit of the whole Prayer Book—and by adopting a low standard of piety, they have unwittingly contributed to depress the very church of which they were so ready to make their boast.

Amid all these difficulties—with the world against her—christians of other denominations looking with suspicion upon her, and regarding it almost as a sacred duty to oppose her establishment, and many of her own children proving untrue and treacherous in the hour of her need—the Episcopal Church in this country, for a long time was like a ship at sea in the midst of a storm—struggling amid contending billows, and every moment in danger of going to the bottom. And she might well have adopted the language of the Psalmist, and said, "All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me."

But blessed be God, a brighter day has begun to dawn upon our Zion, in this land of freedom. The dark cloud of night is rolling away, and already do the tops of her towers and the roofs of her palaces begin to reflect back the rays of morning. Yet all along, in the darkest hour that came over her, her children, who held fast to her standards of doctrine, who abided by her discipline, and drank deep into the spirit of her liturgy, were able to look up and say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: wherefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea: though the waters roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

The author is perfectly aware that many who truly love the Saviour have still very strong prejudices against this church.

It is with the hope of removing some of these prejudices, that he has undertaken the present work; and he would therefore ask the reader to give these pages a candid perusal. The writer and reader, if they are both christians, can have but one object in view—the attainment of truth. In this contemplated *walk about Zion*, the writer, in pointing out "her towers, and bulwarks, and palaces," desires to bear perpetually in mind that he is walking and acting beneath the piercing gaze

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of a holy and truth loving God;—and therefore he would say —"Avaunt all simulation and concealment—all exaggerated pictures, and unreal representations.—Let there be the same deep and solemn feeling resting upon our minds while we go about Zion, that there would be were we now contemplating the Temple at Jerusalem, with the Shechina, the mysterious shadowy symbol of Jehovah's awful presence hanging over the mercy seat, and filling the whole house with the glory of the Lord,*—the same deep and solemn feeling, which we should experience, were we now in company with the prophet Ezekiel, when brought *in the vision of God* to one *whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; who stood in the gate and said unto the prophet, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall show thee. For to the intent that I might show them unto thee, art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel;*†—with the same deep and solemn feeling, that would be inspired, were we with St. John, *carried away in the spirit to a great high mountain, and shown that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, having the glory of God; and her light, like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal, having a wall great and high, and twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.*‡ Be these our feelings, and we shall see all things in the light of truth."

The hope is cherished that these pages will bear evidence, that truth is the great thing aimed at.

"Our heart's desire and prayer to God" is, that while we honestly seek truth, and frankly avow our sentiments, not one sentence may be written which can justly wound the feelings of any brother,—not one line which will awaken regret when we meet that brother on mount Zion, and stand by his side before the throne, to sing the song of the Lamb. We have no doubt that we shall meet with multitudes—with millions, in that world of glory, who have "followed not with

* 1 Kings, 8, 11.
† Ezek. 40, 4.
‡ Rev. 21, 10–12.

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us."* But this belief should not lessen our desire to have all know and embrace the truth. We are the more desirous to lead those of whom we entertain this charitable hope, to an examination of the Episcopal Church. In this matter, we would "see eye to eye." The Episcopal Church has peculiarities. Many who have seen her only at a distance, and under peculiarly unfavourable circumstances, will, we are confident, when they come to know more of her, be led to change their opinion, and look with more kindness, if not with unqualified approbation, upon this eldest daughter of the Reformation.

If the present undertaking shall in any way tend to disabuse the public mind of erroneous impressions, and open the way for the Episcopal Church to take a more advanced station in that gloriously marshalled host that is now going forward to break down the strong holds of sin, and subjugate the earth to the dominion of Christ, we shall feel that the few leisure hours which have been devoted to these hasty and imperfect sketches, have not been spent in vain: that it was not in vain that we ventured to propose to our readers "A WALK ABOUT ZION."

† Luke, 9, 50

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CHAPTER II

WORLDLINESS IN THE CHURCH.

"Twice in her season of decay,
The fallen Church hath felt Elijah's eye
Dart from the wild its piercing ray:
Not keener burns, in the chill morning sky,
The herald star,
Whose touch afar
Shadows and boding night-birds fly.
Methinks we need him once again
That favour'd Seer——but where shall he be found?
KEBLE.

It was our intention to have said to the reader, in the very commencement of this chapter—

"Lift up your eyes, and for one moment fix your gaze, even at this distance, upon the mountain of the Lord: from the very spot where you stand, before we move a single step in our contemplated walk, take a cursory view of Zion: Let your eye now glance over her walls of adamant, her strong foundations, her impregnable towers, and her stately edifices, and then draw near, enter her gates, and survey more minutely the glorious "things which are spoken of this city of our God."

But I have been led to change my purpose. A voice has suddenly broke upon my ear, full of harshness and suspicion, enquiring, "Who are the people, and what is the character of the inhabitants that dwell in this city? We care not how strong are her towers, or how magnificent are the dwellings of Zion, if she is filled with unholy inhabitants."

To this point, then, we must first direct the attention of the reader. We must ask him at once to draw near the gates of Zion, and while looking in upon the inhabitants, try to form an idea of the character they sustain.

What I apprehend and deprecate, is, that some, into whose hands this volume may fall, will, on the ground that our Zion

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is another Nazareth, and that out of it no good thing can come, refuse to accompany us in this walk, which we have undertaken for the express purpose of ascertaining from actual observation, what objects of beauty or of loathsomeness are to be found within the holy precincts of Zion.

Or, in other words, I fear that the opinion, "that in this church persons are admitted upon lower evidences of piety than the gospel warrants, and that its members mingle too largely in the fashionable world, and stand too closely identified with the people that know not God"—I fear that this opinion, which some have embraced, may cause them to shut their eyes upon the facts, and refuse to reflect upon the considerations, which it will be the business of this volume to spread before them.

That men often do make professions of religion, upon too slight and equivocal evidences of renewal of heart, and as a natural sequence upon this, that they do bring into the church an unsanctified spirit, which displays itself in every form of worldliness, at one time hurrying them into acts of dishonesty, and at another, into scenes of gayety and fashion, is a charge, which I verily believe might with truth be laid at the door, not of a single denomination, but of every church of every denomination in christendom. If we mistake not, here is the great breaker on which the Church of the Redeemer has too frequently been wrecked. This has been the resisting force that has retarded the progress of religion in the world.

Christianity has never suffered so seriously from the attacks of its avowed and open enemies, as from the treachery and unfaithfulness of those who professed to be its friends, and were enlisted in the ranks of its defenders. Still I cannot but hope, "that there yet will be a time," to use the words of the learned and excellent John Howe, "there yet will be a time of so copious an effusion of the Holy Spirit, as will invigorate the church afresh, and make it spring up out of its macilent, withered state, unto its primitive liveliness and beauty; when it shall, according to its intended spiritual meaning, resemble the external splendor of its ancient figure, Sion, the perfection of beauty, and arise and shine, the glory of the Lord being risen upon it."*

*Howe's Works, p. 112

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If it be thought that the Episcopal Church is more lax in discipline, than the other evangelical churches in this country, and that her members indulge more freely in fashionable amusements than other christians, perhaps it does not become me to enter into an argument to refute this idea, although I can by no means assent to its truth. There are undoubtedly within the pale of our communion, congregations and individuals that are sadly deficient in those marks and lineaments which indicate spiritual life. They are like withered trees, that disfigure the face of the vineyard of the Lord.—They may be compared to "raging waves of the sea which foam out their own shame." They are indeed "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." But were these dead and graceless churches and individuals much more numerous than they are, it would furnish no valid argument to show that the Episcopal Church was defective in doctrine or discipline; or that it was not the Church of Christ, planted by his own right hand. The churches of Asia, described in the book of Revelation, declined, and the conduct of their members exhibited christianity under a most unlovely aspect. Would it have been fair to have inferred from this fact, that these churches were not apostolic in their constitution? Declension and apostacy have been the bane of the church from the beginning. There was a time in the ancient church of God, when one of his prophets said,—"The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and *I, even I only* am left."—What a sad state of things was here, in the church of God! But was this a reason why a new church should be set up? Was there any natural or necessary tendency in the principles of the Jewish church, to issue in such results?

To suppose this, would be to impeach the wisdom of God, who was the maker and builder of the Jewish, as he is of the Christian Church. The state of things in the Jewish Church at the time just referred to, resulted from the most flagrant departure from the grand and fundamental principles of that church.

And in like manner we can show, that all this worldliness that is laid at our door, wherever it exists, is the result of a most wanton and wicked departure from the standards of the

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Episcopal Church, and in striking discordance with the spirit of piety and godliness which pervades all the institutions of this Zion of the Lord.

I am ready to admit that the natural tendency of institutions will usually be evinced by the results which they produce. But owing to a peculiar combination of circumstances, results may sometimes flow in the train of apparent consequences from the operation of religious institutions, which are merely incidental. To illustrate this idea, I will advert to a fact connected with the history of the Congregational Churches of New-England.

I am far from believing that there is any necessary tendency arising from the constitution of those churches, to lower the standard of vital godliness, or to produce a willingness to receive persons into their communion upon slight and equivocal evidences of a renewal of heart. And yet, from the influence of a combination of circumstances, at one time, a large minority, if not a majority in these churches, were supposed to be men destitute of vital piety. In order that I may not state this matter too strongly, I will here introduce an extract from one of their own writers, the biographer of President Edwards. Speaking of New-England, he says: "So vast a proportion of the first planters of this country were members of the christian church, that *not to be a church member* was a public disgrace, and no man who had not this qualification, was considered capable of holding any civil office. The children of the first planters, also, with comparatively few exceptions, followed the example of their parents, and enrolled their names in the church calender; and there is reason to believe that a large proportion of them were possessed of real piety. *Still there can be no doubt, that a considerable number of them, upon the whole, were of a different character. In the third and fourth generations, the number of this latter class increased to such a degree, as to constitute, if not a majority, yet a large minority of the whole population;* but, such is the influence of national customs, it was still thought as necessary to a fair reputation, and to a full qualification for office, to make a public profession of religion, as before; *and the church, by thus inclosing within its pale the whole rising generation, gathered in a prodigious number of hypocrites;*—and to *make a profession of*

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religion, began to be, on the part of numbers, an act of the same import as it has been on the part of the civil, military and naval officers of England "to qualify," by partaking of the Lord's Supper."*

It was this state of things which involved Jonathan Edwards in all those difficulties which gathered around him like the waves of the angry deep, and finally occasioned his removal from Northampton. He stood up as the servant of the Lord, to oppose the tide of worldliness, which, at that time, was rolling into the Congregational churches like a flood. But he stood up almost alone. Under no other circumstances of his life, do so much heavenly radiance and true moral grandeur gather around the character of this distinguished servant of the Lord, as when he girded himself up to this great conflict, and went right onward in the path of duty, leaving all consequences with God. He indeed fought manfully, and the cause he advocated has triumphed. By that one controversy in relation to the qualifications for church membership, Edwards conferred an everlasting obligation upon the Congregational and Presbyterian churches in this country. He seemed like one raised up of the Lord, to be a purifier of the churches; and it is impossible to say, how much of the consistent piety, the simple-hearted devotedness, the commendable zeal, and the exalted christian benevolence, which now happily characterize a large proportion of the churches of the denominations just referred to, are attributable, under God, to the labors of Edwards.

But I have adverted to this subject for the special object of illustrating the principle, that a declension of religion in any church, is no proof that that church is necessarily in its constitution faulty or defective.

From the fact that the Congregational Churches of New-England, at the time now adverted to, fell into such a lax mode of admitting members, and the cause of vital godliness so fearfully declined, I would by no means argue, that this is the natural, and necessary tendency of things in churches constituted as they are.

Such a fact by itself as the one now adverted to, does not prove that there is any essential defectiveness in the constitu-

*Edwards' Works—vol. 1. p. 303. See also, Christian Spectator, vol 5. p. 288.

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tion of those churches, nor does it furnish the slightest evidence that they are not of apostolic origin.

In like manner, were it true that many persons were admitted within the pale of the Episcopal communion totally destitute of piety, and that many of the members of the church were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," this would not prove that there was any thing fundamentally wrong in the constitution of the church; it would only show that there was a declension of true piety among us—that owing to incidental causes, a fatal mildew and blight had fallen upon our Zion.

I am aware, however, that when the impression is once received, that religion is at a low ebb in any denomination, the idea almost unavoidably starts up in our minds, and gains the ascendency over all our other convictions, that there must be something radically defective in the doctrines or discipline of that denomination.

And I am also aware, that in some parts of our country the opinion has widely prevailed, that there is very little spiritual religion, or vital godliness in the Episcopal Church. On this point, it does not become me to bear direct testimony and I would therefore say to the reader as Philip did to Nathaniel, "*Come and see.*" "Walk about Zion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces."

Thus much my subject requires me to affirm, that if there be a deficiency in the zeal and piety of Episcopalians, that deficiency is not the legitimate result of the operation of any of the institutions of the church. The tendency of all her established arrangements is towards a very high and elevated standard of piety. Of this, every one will be convinced who candidly examines the Prayer Book.

Were there any tendency in the arrangements of the Episcopal Church, to depress the standard of piety among her members, it would be found either in the fact that the entrance to her pale was not suitably guarded, or that an imperfect supervision was maintained over her members after their admission within her sacred enclosures.

The remainder of the chapter will be principally occupied in considering these points.

1. How is the entrance to the Church guarded?

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Most obviously, the entrance into the fold of the Redeemer should not be an open pathway, for the ingress of all, however destitute of spiritual qualifications. There must be a guard at the door.—Some principle must be established, and understood, upon which members are to be admitted.—The principle recognised by the gospel most manifestly is, that those who are admitted into the fold, should exhibit decided evidence of a change of heart, and of possessing that vital godliness which displays itself in a new, holy, and well ordered life. Wherever candidates are admitted upon lower evidence than this—wherever the signs and seals of the covenant are extended to the unrenewed as converting ordinances, there, from the nature of things, the church must soon be filled with ungodly members. On this point, the Episcopal Church takes the true gospel ground. No person is regarded as being in full communion with her, till he has received the rite of *Confirmation*. Confirmation, then, is the great door of admission to the privileges of the church, at which she stations her guard. Her rubricks and standards, by a fair and necessary construction, teach, "*that confirmation is to be administered only on a credible profession of repentance and faith, or of that new birth of the spirit, which is symbolized in baptism, and is the true beginning of the christian character, and the christian life.*"

The practical adoption of this principle is earnestly pressed upon the attention of the clergy by our Bishops.* By express provision in the canons of the church, persons are to be "prepared," and "*previously instructed*,"† before they are presented for the holy ordinance of confirmation, and no one is to receive this rite, unless his name is presented to the Bishop by his Pastor, as a fit and "properly qualified" person to enter upon such solemn engagements:—And can any one doubt, that that pastor who wittingly presents the name of an unconverted and godless sinner as a candidate for this holy rite, will find the blood of a lost soul on his sacerdotal robe, in the great day of final reckoning!

* See Bp. Griswold's address at the diocesan convention for 1833. Also Bp. M'Ilvaine's address to the Ohio convention for 1834—also Bp. Meade on Confirmation: see also the authorities referred to in "The Pastor's Testimony," 4th edit., chap. 2d.

† 26. Canon.

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Not only is the principle above adverted to, established as the rule of admission to the church, but the application of that principle, in deciding who are proper subjects for admission to the church, is committed to the most competent hands.

The pastor of each congregation, "whom the Holy Ghost hath made overseer of the flock," whose great business it is to understand thoroughly the principles of the Bible, and to observe their operation and influence upon the hearts and conduct of men, is most properly placed as the responsible sentinel at the gate of Zion, to see that none enter except such as give evidence that they are truly the children of the Most High.

Though it be an unquestionable fact, that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety," yet it is no less true, that where close attention and great vigilance are necessary to secure certain results, the more you can concentrate responsibility upon a single individual, and make that responsibility felt, the more sure you are to attain those results.

On this ground, we think that the entrance to the fold of the Redeemer, in the Episcopal Church, is well and wisely guarded. In this church, the business of examining candidates for admission to the privileges of the household of faith, is committed entirely to the clergyman, whose own reputation thus stands in a measure connected with the character of each individual whom he admits as a communicant.

We are aware that many of the denominations around us, adopt another method. It is not our design to cast the slightest censure upon their practice.

It may not be improper, however, in this connection, to observe, that an intelligent and devoted minister of the Presbyterian Church, not long since remarked in the hearing of the author, "That he decidedly preferred the Presbyterian to the Congregational Church on this ground—that the door of entrance to the former was better guarded than that of the latter. The *one* has a chosen few placed as sentinels, but in the *other*, this business is left to the whole church. I fully believe," continued he, "the affairs of the church will be transacted with more judgment and caution, by a *few* judicious, experienced men, than where *all* are brought in to participate in these transactions. Just in proportion as you increase the number of individuals to whom any business of

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moment is committed, you divide responsibility, and diminish the prospect, that the business will be done in the best manner. This principle is well understood by business men.

Take for instance, an encampment of soldiers. Is it customary to place the whole army as sentinels, or a chosen few?—We know that military men act wisely in this arrangement, and those who are placed as sentinels, by the responsibility that rests upon them, are made to be more vigilant, guarded and cautious.

So also in ordinary cases of sickness, the patient is much safer in the hands of one skilful physician, than if he had a dozen attending upon him. The same principle comes in here. As you increase the number of those who share responsibility, you lessen the probability of a favourable result.

While listening to these remarks, the thought occured to me, 'With how much more force does this reasoning apply to the practice adopted by the Episcopal Church, where, the whole responsibility in relation to the admission of communicants, devolves upon the minister, whose business it is to be conversant with every form of christian experience, and who is the friend of each member of the flock, in whom all have confidence, and who will therefore be more likely to draw out the real views, and ascertain the precise spiritual character of each applicant, than any other man.' While, therefore, the whole undivided weight of the responsibility of admitting and excluding communicants, is rolled upon the minister, he still has the benefit of counsel from such members of the church as he may choose to consult; for each member of the church feels deeply interested in the character of those who are visibly connected with him in the bonds of the christian covenant.

To illustrate still farther the safety and benefit of this arrangement in the Episcopal Church, which we have been considering, I will here introduce a letter, which I have been permitted to transcribe for this purpose.

This letter was addressed to an Episcopal Clergyman, by a lady of a highly cultivated mind, who had been educated in the bosom of another church, but who found the desired resting place for her soul within the walls of our Zion. The oc-

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casion which called forth this communication, will be explained by the communication itself.

"Much esteemed Pastor:

I take the liberty of addressing you upon a very important subject. I have long felt it my duty to make a profession of religion, but a variety of causes has hitherto concurred to prevent my taking this step. Your discourse, however, last Sabbath morning, upon the text—"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me"—went home to my heart in such a way, that I feel I can no longer put off this solemn duty of dedicating myself to God.

The principal object of this letter, is to request you to favour me with the opportunity of an early interview, in relation to this matter. It may not be improper, however, for me here to give you some idea of the trials and difficulties that have been in my path.

I had the unspeakable honor and blessing of being born of christian parents. Never was a child reared up with more religious care than myself, yet I took counsel of my own wicked heart, and went after the vanities of the world. O how it pierced like iron the tender bosom of my dear mother! My honored, sainted parents, now in heaven—oh that they could know the bitterness and anguish of spirit which I have suffered in thinking how my foolish, wayward conduct must have wounded them! They went down to the grave before 'I came to myself.'

It is now ten years since my mind was first awakened to seriousness. The night of horror and gloom which then came over me, no one can know. It was in the midst of a life of gayety and fashion, that a word entered my ear and sank down to the bottom of my soul. An unseen hand mysteriously drew aside the veil, which all along had hung before my eyes, and revealed to me my sinfulness.—Then I went mourning all the day. I poured out my heart before the Lord, and said, '*Thou hast removed my soul far off from peace.*' 'I said, *My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord*, remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance and is humbled in me.'

But he 'whose mercies are new every morning,' gracious

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ly lifted upon me, as I trust, the light of his reconciled countenance, and the troubled waters began to subside.

Resting my hopes on the cross of Christ, I began to think of making a public profession of religion, but I unexpectedly found an insuperable barrier in the way. I was told that in order to be admitted to the communion of Saints, I must go before the whole Church and relate my experience. Though my sainted parents had lived and died members of this Church, and I had the highest regard for the venerable pastor, from whose lips I had heard precious counsel to guide me in my heavenward way, I instinctively recoiled from the idea of giving a public rehearsal of the religious exercises of my mind. It seemed to me such a departure from that sensitive, yet lovely female delicacy, which instinctively shrinks from public gaze, that I could not see how a modest, retiring woman, could take such a step. The more I reflected upon this subject, the more I became strengthened in the conviction that it was not my duty to seek a connection with the people of God in this way. Such trains of thought as the following passed through my mind.

There is *no necessity* for this public rehearsal of one's experience. Satisfactory evidence of a renewal of heart, can be better obtained from a private interview, than by any statement made in public. Under the agitating circumstances of such an occasion, how incompetent must a timid female be to convey any just idea of her doctrinal views, or the state of her religious feelings!

I thought also, I discovered that such recitals were attended with evil. I went to hear several persons relate their experience. It appeared to me, that there was a powerful influence unconsciously operating upon the mind of each one, to relate what was striking in the way of religious exercise, rather than decisive as to christian character; and in all these various experiences, there was such a seeming identity, as to give them a sort of stereotype appearance. And I have often met with persons ready to give themselves up to despair, because they had never experienced any thing precisely similar to what they had so frequently heard related by those who presented themselves as candidates for admission to the Church.

I said to my pastor one day,

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"Do you not think that this system has defects? Now I can lay open my mind perfectly to you. Are you not capable of judging of my fitness for admission to the spiritual fold? Ought not the Church to have so much confidence in you as to rely upon your judgment in this matter? How can you instruct us in the way of life, if you are not competent to judge what constitutes suitable qualifications for church membership? And then do you not think that there would be much fewer difficulties in the church, if, when there was any little variance, the aggrieved members came to you as their counsellor and umpire? What injury is often done to the cause of Christ, by bringing before the public those little bickerings among christians, which, if the minister had had the power of discipline in his hands, would have never been blazoned to the world!"

In reply to these remarks, my venerated pastor sighed and said, "There is undoubtedly room for improvement in our system, but at present I have not the power of bringing it about."

Dear good man, he now sleeps in Jesus, and has gone to that happy world where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

To conclude then this letter, which is already too long, these were some of the obstacles in my way, which prevented me from making an earlier profession of religion. Perhaps, however, you will think that I ought to have broken through all those difficulties, and taken my stand openly on the side of the Lord. This is now my desire—to declare myself on the Lord's side. I love the Episcopal Church on many accounts, and surely none the less that I find in it precisely that arrangement in reference to the preparatory steps for the admission of members, that I had long thought the most expedient.

I hope that nothing I have said will be construed into an indication of unkind feeling towards the denomination of christians among whom I was born. I believe them to be truly the people of the Lord. I love them for their piety and devotedness to God. Still I must express my honest preference for the Episcopal Church. Pardon this very long epistle, and believe me &c. T."

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The object for which the preceding letter has been introduced, is to illustrate the advantages connected with the arrangement that prevails in the Episcopal Church, with respect to the admission of members. I think that the candid reader cannot fail to see that a most effectual method has been adopted to guard the avenues of entrance to the fold. There is another consideration, however, to which our attention must be directed, if we would determine whether the best measures are adopted to preserve the purity of the Church.

2. What kind of supervision is maintained over communicants, after their admission to the fold?

They are placed under the especial care of the Pastor, upon whose ministry they attend, and upon whom devolves the high responsibility, not only of watching over them as the shepherd does his flock, but of reproving, admonishing, and, if it becomes necessary, of cutting off such as walk disorderly, and dishonor their holy calling.

The language addressed at the time of their admission, to those who are set apart to the holy office, and to whom is committed this high trust, is very solemn and affecting.

"And now again we exhort you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye have in remembrance into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge, ye are called: That is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's Sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ forever.

Have always, therefore, printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The Church and congregation whom you must serve, is his spouse, and his body. *And if it shall happen that the same Church, or any member thereof, do take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence, ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue.*"*

* See "*The Ordering of Priests.*" The greatness of the punishment above referred to, may be gathered from Ez. 33, the chapter usually read on this occasion.

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Dr. Bedell: Happy mode of admonishing erring communicants.

I cannot here refrain from presenting an instance of the manner in which one of the ministers of the Episcopal Church, carried out the duty here enjoined, in his intercourse with his people. I allude to the lamented Bedell, whose piety, devotedness, and self-sacrificing spirit, strikingly remind us of the character of the first heralds of the cross. He did not wait until his people had fallen into some great and grievous sin, before he lifted the note of remonstrance. The very first step of departure from the way everlasting, was observed with a solicitude, which prompted him to seek to apply an immediate remedy, and that, in a way the most delicate and yet the most direct and pungent.

The happy manner in which this was done, will be best illustrated by an extract from the interesting memoir that has just appeared of his life.

"The letter below, a copy of which was sent to individuals among his people, as occasion required, presents a singular and beautiful illustration of the delicacy with which this painful duty was discharged by him, and the way in which he used, with experience and skill, "the sword of the spirit," which is the word of God, in contending with difficulties which arose around him.

"My dear Friend:

Among the duties of the ministry laid down in the Scriptures, I find the following, "to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." I have frequently found, that a hint, given in a spirit of love, has been effectual to remove an error, or to rectify an abuse; and that such a hint, if given in scripture language, carries with it peculiar weight. I propose to adopt this plan. Sometimes I wish to rebuke, sometimes to commend. I shall do both without offence, if I do them in the words of God. To illustrate my meaning: If I send this letter to one of my communicants, and simply quote at the bottom, Luke x. ch., 41, 42, I mean that one to understand that I think him or her neglecting the soul for worldly concerns. If I quote Hebrews x. ch., 23, 25, it will be understood that I think the individual to whom it is sent, negligent in attendance to the lectures or prayer-meetings. If I quote 2 Corinthians, vi. ch., 17, it will be understood that I

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consider the person addressed entirely too much disposed to enter into follies and amusements inconsistent with the christian calling. If I quote 1 Peter, III. ch., 3, 4, it will be understood that I allude to dress, &c. If I quote Proverbs XVI. 32, it will be understood that I consider the individual under the influence of an improper spirit.—These I mean as mere specimens for explanation, and will be sufficient to show my meaning. The passage I mean for you may be different from any of these, and you will see it at the bottom of the page. I pray you to turn to it at once; ascertain what I mean, pray over it, and see if the hint thus affectionately given, may not, by a divine blessing, conduce to your spiritual and eternal good. No one knows that I have addressed this letter to you. It is meant as entirely of a private character. May the Lord bless you, and keep you by his grace, through faith unto salvation."

"Your friend and Pastor."

From no quarter are so many dangers to be apprehended, as from the blandishments and caresses of the world.

In the early ages of christianity, when the iron hand of oppression was lifted up to crush the cause of the Redeemer, and the only way to heaven seemed to be through the door of martyrdom, the Church rose to human view from amid the dreary night of Pagan darkness, like a bright summer's morn, and moved on, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Immediately, the world began to pay court to this new and rising power. Unhappily, the church threw her gates wide open, and there rolled in a tide of power, and wealth, and fashion, and worldly influence. The banner of the cross speedily found its way into Italy, the very seat of Empire. Soon it entered the eternal city, and floated in triumph over the Capitol. From that moment, a blight and mildew fell upon the heritage of the Lord.

There is nothing so much to be dreaded as the caresses of the world: its frowns cannot hurt us; but oh, how often have its caresses marred the beauty of Zion, as though suddenly smitten by an invisible hand—how often have they brought within her sacred courts, "*the idols of the desolator* * and

* Marginal reading, Daniel IX. 27. Referred to, Matt. XXIV. 15.

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caused the Most High to "cover the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger."

That the Episcopal Church most earnestly seeks to guard her children against these insidious influences, is evident from the fact, that she permits none to enter within her sacred pale, till they have solemnly vowed, to "renounce *the vain pomp and glory of the world*:" and the baptismal water is applied to no candidate, till the fervent supplication is offered up for him, "that he may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the Devil, *the world*, and the flesh." And immediately after the application of the baptismal water, the sign of the cross is marked on the brow of each newly enlisted soldier of Christ, "in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed manfully to fight under his banner against Sin, *the World*, and the Devil."

In farther corroboration of the fact, that the Episcopal Church is truly anxious to keep her members back from the eddying currents which sweep around the great Maelstrom of fashion and worldliness, and draw so many thousands within its fatal influence, I would refer to the circumstance of her having appointed solemn services for so many week days during the year, as though determined by these holy influences emanating from the sanctuary, to break up that worldly enchantment, which might otherwise bind her members to the earth. The effect of such a season as that of Lent, continuing with constantly increasing and deepening solemnity for six weeks—and all these, weeks for special self-examination—lowly self-abasement, earnest prayer, and devout meditation upon the sufferings and death of Christ and upon our own guilt, which sharpened the nails and pointed the accursed spear—cannot fail to be highly salutary in promoting personal holiness.

The ecclesiastical bodies connected with the Episcopal Communion, have also, from time to time, in no equivocal manner, proclaimed their sentiments in relation to shutting out worldliness from the church. In 1817, in the General Convention, where all the Episcopal churches in the United States are represented, a document was presented by the House of Bishops, and unanimously passed, protesting against the practice on the part of the communicants, of indulging in worldly amusements. The resolution then passed is in har

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mony with the facts already adverted to. It declares that—"The House of Bishops, solicitous for the preservation of the purity of the church, and the piety of its members, are induced to impress upon the Clergy, the important duty, with a discreet and earnest zeal, of warning the people of their respective cures, of the danger of an indulgence in those worldly pleasures which may tend to withdraw the affections from spiritual things," &c. And I trust that there are many watchmen on the walls of our Zion, who are not neglectful of the duty here pointed out.*

And yet I have no doubt that instances do occur, where congregations bearing the name of Episcopal, "*will not hear the law of the Lord*: which say to the seers, see not: and to the prophets, prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things: prophecy deceits." And there may be those, clothed with the high responsibility of messengers of the Lord, so recreant to their ordination vows, that in order to draw around them a brighter halo of popularity, they will listen to this syren voice, and lead their people on blindfold to the precipice. It is greatly to be feared that there are such congregations and ministers in every denomination. It was so in God's ancient church. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means: and my people love to have it so."

Still, I must also say, that in this slanderous world, christian churches, and christian ministers are often greatly maligned. How frequently do we hear the strong language of censure and severe reprehension uttered against a minister, whose greatest crime is some slight imprudence. When the facts are brought out, it is often found that he who lay under such a load of censure, was all the time actuated by the purest and holiest intentions. The truth is, the world is always ready to blacken the character of every baptized follower of the Lamb. Our Saviour plainly told his disciples that the world *hated him*, and that the servant could not expect to fare better than the master. When will christians understand this? When will they learn to abandon the suicidal act of calumniating each other? When will they learn to exercise towards each other that charity which "beareth all things, believeth

* See the Appendix to Bickersteth's Treatise on the Lord's supper Edited by Dr. Bedell.

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all things, hopeth all things?" The world, as long as it remains at enmity with God, will ever be ready to scandalize christians, and never will "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole Heaven, be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," till they learn to shut their ears upon "the railing accusations" which Satan is bringing, in turn, against each denomination of christians.

In illustration of the unfounded nature of much of the reproach that is heaped upon the ministers of the cross, allow me, in concluding this chapter, to give a rapid sketch of an instance that fell under my own observation. A number of years since, the Rev. Mr. O. V. was settled in a country village, far in the interior. At the time to which I advert, he and the church over which he presided, were suffering under the heavy charge, of favouring gay and worldly amusements. "Such a man," it was said, "could have no piety! such a church could have nothing more than the form of godliness, and hardly that."

The ground of all this denunciation, was at most, but an act of imprudence on the part of Mr. O. V., and there were connected with this act several redeeming circumstances.

This Reverend gentleman was young and highly talented. Till the event just adverted to, no one had doubted his piety. His pungent and faithful exhibitions of divine truth, had brought many awakened sinners to the foot of the cross. Among these, was a large number of young persons. They had broken away from their former gay associates, and taken an open stand on the side of the Lord.

Those former associates, however, were constantly devising expedients to draw them back again within the fatal whirlpool of worldly pleasure.

It was during one of the summer months—a season when the country has peculiar charms, and the deep grove, with its cool refreshing shade, seems like another Eden, contrasted with the heat and suffocating air of the town—that several of the persons above alluded to, proposed a walk of some two miles into the country, for the purpose of having a sort of rural entertainment in a shady retreat well known in that neighborhood. The whole thing was unquestionably got up for the purpose of festive hilarity and enjoyment. This was not,

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however, the aspect under which the matter was presented to the young members of the church who were invited to join the party. Still, their sense of propriety was such, that they declined the invitation. To overcome this backwardness on the part of those who had united themselves with the people of God, a committee waited upon Rev. Mr. O. V., and extended to him a pressing invitation to meet the assembled party at the place appointed for rendezvous.

At first, he promptly declined, but when the invitation continued to be pressed, and he received the assurance that every thing would be conducted with the most strict regard to decorum and propriety, he at length yielded to their importunity and consented to go, remarking, however—

"If I go, I must go in the character of a minister of Christ, and you must not be surprised, if I speak to you in reference to my Master's business."

To this they readily assented. The great point was now gained. The news flew through the village like wild-fire, that the Rev. Mr. O. V. was to be one of this party. The invitations were reiterated to the young members of the church, accompanied with the invincible argument, "Surely, there cannot be the slightest impropriety in going, since the minister is to be there." In most instances, the argument was successful.

The company were soon on their way, eager to reach their place of destination, where so much pleasure was anticipated.

The spot selected for this rural recreation, was truly picturesque. An area of several acres had, many years previous, been partially cleared up, so that the earth was covered with thickly matted grass, which appeared like a firm and unbroken carpet of green. There had been left a sufficient number of the ancient giants of the forest, spreading abroad their lofty and leafy branches, to furnish a perfect and delightful shade, to the assembled group.

The scenery around them was uncommonly fine. On the east there stretched away, as far as the eye could extend, a dense, and deepening forest: and on the west, there rose in the immediate vicinity a precipitous mountain, whose top reached to the very clouds. Around its base, separating it from the plot of ground, where the party were assembled,

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flowed a beautiful stream, whose gliding waters catching, by reflection, the color of the verdant foliage that overhung the banks of the stream, presented in its course, as far as the eye could follow it, a rippling surface of deep emerald. On the north and south were caught, here and there, through the openings in the trees, a view of a rich, and finely cultivated country.

The whole company were now assembled, and began to make preparations for their repast. There was all of the usual quantum of glee, hilarity, and mirth.

To this scene of rural gaity, Mr. O. V. was now directing his steps. As he wended his solitary way through grove and field, and was passing along thoughtfully by the side of a bramble, a voice suddenly cried out—

"Ah—ah, I am sorry you are going there!"

Startled from his reverie, he looked up, and saw an old woman of homely appearance, in the act of picking berries. He fixed his eye upon her for a moment, and immediately recognised in her one of his communicants, who was very poor, and supported herself, during the summer months, principally by gathering fruit in this way, and bringing it to market.

When Mr. O. V. was sufficiently recovered from the momentary surprise into which he was thrown, he replied—

"My good friend, is it you?"

Intent on the idea which had taken possession of her mind, the simple hearted woman could neither hear, nor think, of any thing else, and she again uttered her lamentation—

"Ah, I did not think that you would go there!"

"Go where?" said Mr. O. V.

"Why to meet those frolicsome young folks: a deal of hurt it will do, I am sure, to the church!"

"And what leads you to think so?"

"Because," said she, "I have heard already many lamen over it, and say that Mr. O. V. was 'coming down from the work of the Lord,' and beginning to get into worldly amusements."

"They are greatly mistaken, my friend," said he.

"Well, well," she replied, "I heard a lady say, as I came along, 'how can Mr. O. V. ever preach any more against *the pomps and vanities of the world!*'"

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"Indeed, I shall be truly sorry," responded he, "if my consenting to meet our young friends on this occasion will interfere in the slightest manner with my future usefulness."

"Well, you will see," said she.

Mr. O. V. passed on. A new train of thought had been started in his mind. He began to reflect that, perhaps, he had acted unadvisedly. The inquiry suggested itself, "Whether the scene, though fraught with no special evil to himself, might not exert a deleterious influence upon those whom it had, hitherto, been his great object to lead in the way everlasting? They were constantly exposed to influences calculated to destroy and deaden all spirituality of mind. Would not the step he had taken seem to give countenance to those scenes of amusement, where the very excitement is enough to intoxicate the mind, and bring it under the power of error?"

While indulging in this train of thought, the voices of the gay group broke upon his ear: He was soon in the midst of the party, where every face seemed beaming with animation, and every heart bounding with rapture. The rural board was tastefully arranged, and exhibited every description of delicacies. As soon as the repast was finished, Mr. O. V., desirous to repair the injury that his appearance at this place might have occasioned, begged the privilege of addressing a few words to the company. The whole group immediately clustered around the spot where he stood. Taking a hymn book from his pocket, he remarked:

"The creator of this beauteous scene, is worthy of praise and adoration. Will you join me in singiug a hymn?" He then read two or three verses of the following hymn.

> "Should nature's charms, to please the eye,
> In sweet assemblage join:
> All nature's charms would droop and die,
> Jesus compared with thine."

The whole company united in singing, and their voices sounded amidst this wild woodland scene, as they were prolonged, and died away in faint echo, not unlike the sweet minstrelsy of heaven.

The hymn being closed the minister knelt down on the grass, and looked up to the Eternal One in prayer. The solemn and affecting manner in which he supplicated the throne of

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grace, dissipated every feeling of levity, with which any of the group at first gathered around this man of God.—The prayer being finished he addressed them in a strain of remark something like this:

"When two of your number waited upon me, with an invitation to meet you on the present occasion, I yielded to their importunity, with the express understanding, that I should come here as the minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have not come here to frown on your innocent joys, but to say to you in the kind accents of friendship, that you are immortal beings, and that you ought never to lose sight of your high destination, as accountable and undying intelligences. I cannot but hope that there are none in this assemblage,

> "Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
> That made them, an intruder on their joys,
> Start at his awful name, or deem his praise
> A jarring note——————"

"My purpose is not to interrupt your enjoyment, but to direct your thoughts, to considerations of high and everlasting importance. Look around upon this scene of nature. He who planted these lofty trees, under whose shade you are sitting—who reared up that mountain, whose summit is lost in the clouds—who rolls along that emerald stream that bathes the mountain's base—who planted yonder sun in the firmament of heaven, and covered yonder forest with its foliage, has said, by the mouth of his inspired prophet:

"*We all do fade as a leaf.* And again; *let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgement and righteousness, in the earth.*

"To understand and know God, to be the subject of his loving-kindness, and the partaker through Christ of his righteousness, is an attainment infinitely more desirable, than any possession of earth.

"*Youthful beauty* is regarded by its young possessor, as a gem of inestimable value. And no one, who has ever gazed upon the finely moulded features, the glowing countenance, the sparkling eye, the symmetrical form dignified in

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its attitude, and graceful in all its movements, can look with indifference on these marks of beauty, which the Creator sometimes impresses upon the human face and form. No one can question, but that this visible loveliness, which stands combined with one's external existence, is in itself desirable. The Creator meant that it should be regarded as a blessing, and like every other earthly blessing, that it should lift the heart of its possessor with increased gratitude to the source, whence it was derived. But this gem has inscribed upon it, these monitory words, *Look to heaven, there alone blooms immortal beauty.* This earthly possession fades like a leaf. It lasts but an hour. Its existence is as brief and evanescent as the spangled dew drops of morning. The very rays of the bright luminary which impart to those drops their lustre, drink them up.—Disease, death, or continued life itself, shakes blight and mildew upon every opening bud of youthful beauty. Even while we are gazing upon the bright vision, it vanishes away forever. Who then will be so unwise, as to build his happiness on such a foundation? Who will glory in the possession of this short lived and quickly fading flower, and reject the riches of redeeming grace?

"We are told that there is in the youthful bosom a redundancy of spirits that seeks to expend itself in all the diversified amusements of the dance and the song, the gay sallies of mirth, and the joyous festivities of the merry meeting. Every benevolent mind must feel a sympathetic throb of delight, in witnessing the happiness of others. But every thing which excites and exhilarates the spirits, does not bring substantial enjoyment.

"Just look into some scene of earthly pleasure, where all is gay and joyous—where every glowing countenance is covered with animation, and every sparkling eye filled with rapture. Will that scene last? Look again: the dance is finished—the song is ended—the company have separated—lassitude and feverish restlessness now sit, like an hateful incubus, upon each individual of that happy group. Disease has fastened upon one of the number: Whither can he now turn for relief? The physician tells him his case is hopeless. Parents and friends gather around his dying couch, and wring their hands in despair: The fell destroyer presses on, regardless of their tears, to overturn and demolish the citadel

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of life. The shades of evening have gathered around. In the sick chamber, all is lonely, and silent, and noiseless. Then comes over the dying one, like a sickly dream, the recollection of that festive night—of those gay and reckless scenes of vanity, which the children of pleasure are so eager to renew. But O, with what altered feelings are they now viewed! How worthless do they appear, as the veil is lifted up which reveals an untried eternity. How much would that dying one now give for a hope in Christ!

"Again: there is no period in life more interesting, than that, in which young hearts feel the touch of kindrid sympathies, and are held in union by the rosied wreath of love: And there is not on earth a scene more lovely, than that which is exhibited in the domestic circle, where are hourly exchanged, all the kind and endearing offices that are due between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters. This is a scene upon which the benevolent Creator must look with approbation. Still, he did not design that it should last but a few fleeting days, lest the hearts of the sons of men should be turned away from their future residence in the skies.

"We have seen the bride, who stood before the altar in all the bloom of youth, and with the prospect of many long years of happiness before her, in a few short months, bending with sable weeds over the grave of her wedded lover.

"We have seen vice working worse and wider ruin than death; planting thorns, where hope had seen nothing but flowers; leaving in the heart which, a short time before, had been the happy seat of love and joy, nothing but blighted affection and grim despair.

"We have seen families, happy in each others' society, meeting, day after day, beneath the same roof, their minds and feelings all in unison, and enjoying an intercourse, so sweet, affectionate, and heavenly, that their dwelling seemed like another paradise. Only a few years elapsed, and the circle was broken up. The hard necessity of uncontrollable circumstances placed between them a distance, scarcely less than the diameter of the earth. The great destroyer of the human race knocked at the door of their distant and separate dwellings; and the daughter felt not on her forehead, through the lingering sickness that preceded dissolution, the soft and

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soothing hand of a tender mother—for that hand was already cold in the grave. The son sank beneath the ravages of mortal disease, but the anxious eye of a father looked not on him—the unwearied affection of a sister tended not around his bed: strangers closed his dying eyes, and his grave is in a foreign land.

"And thus I might go on, and show that transitoriness is written upon every object of human possession—that wealth, and knowledge, and honor, will all pass away like the morning cloud and the early dew. In eternity, the possessor of millions will have no need of his wealth, nor the hero of his laurels, nor the statesman of his political science, nor the scholar of his erudition, nor the jurist of his legal acquirements, nor the physician of his medical skill, nor the agriculturist of his knowledge of soils; but the sinner will have infinite need of Christ and his salvation. Most affectionately, therefore, would I entreat you to build your hopes upon nothing beneath the skies. Seek first—seek early—seek in the May morning of your young being, 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other necessary things shall be added thereunto.'

"Do you shrink away from the thought of assuming the character of a disciple of Christ? Do you imagine that the christian has a dull and gloomy life? Do you think it will be necessary to mingle in worldly amusements, in order to render life tolerable? Do you suppose that God requires hard things of those whom he calls to be his children? I might ask, in the language of an eloquent author,* 'Has the Creator dealt hardly with the papilio, because, in consequence of His ordinance, it changes its nature, ceases to crawl on the ground, and mounts aloft in the air, deriving its pleasure from a new source? Has the captive, long a prisoner in the Siberian mines, any reason for accusing his sovereign of barbarity, when his chains are knocked off, and he is restored to the light of day, and to the pleasures of society on the surface of the earth; because he is now separated from those low gratifications to which he was obliged to resort for want of better, while he was confined in subterranean caverns? The objection is built on falseood; for it supposes the things of the world to be suited to the faculties of an im-

* Biddulph.

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mortal mind, which is made for the enjoyment of God, and which nothing but God, His favor, and friendship can ever satisfy.—But the believer is become, by regeneration, *a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things are become new.* The aspect of all those things, with which he has hitherto been conversant, is now changed. The follies of the world have lost their power of giving him contentment; if, indeed, they can be said to afford it to any person. His hopes and fears, his desires and aversions, his joys and sorrows, arise from new causes, and are directed to new ends. What he receives, in lieu of the bubble which he relinquishes, is sterling gold. Had the prodigal son any cause of complaint, when, in consequence of the gracious reception which his father gave him, he was no longer under a necessity of feeding on husks with the swine which his former master had set him to keep? Let the christian, who is enjoying the privileges of his profession, be asked, whether the requisition of renouncing the world be harsh; and whether God, who makes it, be an Egyptian task-master. He will know how to answer the question, by replying, '*I am dead; and my life is hid with Christ in God.*'*

"Rely upon it, the true christian alone, lives an angelic life here below. If you wish for present and eternal happiness, seek it in God."

This thrilling appeal produced a deep sensation. The whole company returned to their several homes, with good and serious impressions on their minds.

Though Mr. O. V., in his intercourse with this gay young party, certainly acted like a minister of Jesus Christ, I presume that the reader will think, that it would have been prudent for him to have declined the invitation altogether. For taking this step, a load of censure was unsparingly heaped upon him, and the church of which he was the pastor, was denounced as destitute of Piety.

In relation to worldly conformity, and indulgence in worldly amusements, ministers and christians, in the view of the Author, cannot use too much caution. The rule is a good one, never to go to any scene, or place, where Jesus Christ would not be a welcome guest.

The idea of mixing with the giddy and frivolous, in all

* Col. III. ch. 3.

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their varied rounds of amusement, to exert a restraining influence upon them, and show them that religion is not gloomy, is abundantly preposterous. They who take this course, are almost always borne along with the current, and led to participate in all the extravagance and worldliness of those who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." There is not one instance in a hundred, where even the christian minister, in such a scene, can cause those around him to remember, that his great business is, to win souls to Christ. Were ministers able to do this, and were it considered decorous to speak of eternal things, in those fashionable circles, where their presence is now frequently sought—were they to go with the spirit, and decision, and fearlessness of young O. V., they would soon cease to be welcome guests in those circles. The reason that their society is now sought, is, that there is a tacit understanding, that they will not open their lips on the subject of Christ, and his salvation.

If worldliness is to be shut out from the church—if Zion is to stand, like a city upon a hill, full of light and glory, then all the professed people of God must be willing to be *singular*—must be willing to "*come out and be separate from the world.*" We cannot be true disciples of Christ, unless we are willing to take up our cross and follow Him.—And my earnest prayer to God in behalf of Zion is, that there may be among professing christians, an increased willingness to give up all for Christ, and have for the one great object for which they live—the glory of God.

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CHAPTER III.

A GLANCE AT ZION.

"I love to know that not alone
I meet the battle's angry tide;
That sainted myriads from their throne
Descend to combat at my side:
Mine is no solitary choice,
See *here*, the seal of saints impressed;
The prayer of millions swells my voice,
The mind of ages fills my breast."

CUNNINGHAM.

Bunyan's idea of the christian church is not only striking but just—*a place for shelter and refreshment to the weary pilgrim, on his way to the Celestial City.* In that inimitable work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, when Christian was well nigh crushed to the earth, under the recollection of his former miscarriages—when he was in the very act of "acknowledging and bewailing his manifold sins and wickedness—and the remembrance of those sins was grievous unto him, and the burthen of them intolerable,"* *he lifted up his eyes and behold, there was a very stately palace before him, the name of which was Beautiful, and it stood just by the high-way side.*† This house was built by the Lord of the hill, and built for the relief and security of pilgrims. In it, Christian found the rest he needed. He was lodged in a large upper room, whose window opened towards the sun rising. "The name of the chamber was Peace, where he slept till break of day, and then he awoke and sung,

"Where am I now! is this the love and care
Of Jesus for the men that pilgrims are,
Thus to provide! That I should be forgiven
And dwell already the next door to Heaven!"

Had we Bunyan's graphic power, we would instantly trans-

* Communion service of the Episcopal Church.
† Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

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port the reader to some such chamber as that in which Pilgrim was lodged, whose window looked out over the towers, and palaces, and bulwarks of Zion: or to the top of that stately palace, where he beheld the *delectable mountains*, which were a part of Emanuel's land, and were beautified with woods and vineyards, and every description of fruits; with perennial flowers, and orchards, and fountains of water. But as we possess no such magic gift, we must be content to go along in the plain beaten path, which leads round about Zion, and form our opinion of this mountain of the Lord, from the successive views which we take of it.

As I have alluded to Bunyan's Christian, in his journey to Mount Zion, I will add, that what he saw in his walk, may help us to form some idea of what we ought to look for, in our proposed ramble.

May the Lord grant that our walk may resemble that of Christian and his friends, "when their way lay just upon the bank of the river of life. There they walked with great delight. They drank also of the water of the river, which was pleasant, and enlivening to their weary spirits. On the banks of the river on either side, were green trees for all manner of fruit; on either side of the river, was also a meadow curiously beautified with lillies, and it was green all the year long. In this meadow, they lay down and slept; for here they might lie down safely. When they awoke, they gathered again of the fruit of the trees, and drank again of the water of the river, and then lay down again to sleep. Thus they did several days and nights.—Then they sang:—

> Behold ye, how these crystal streams do glide,
> To comfort Pilgrims by the highway side.
> The meadows green, besides their fragrant smell,
> Yield dainties for them: and he that can tell
> What pleasant fruit, yea, leaves, these trees do yield,
> Will soon sell all, that he may buy this field."

Our humble prayer to God for the reader and ourselves is, that while we attempt to walk about Zion, we may be led by the great Shepherd of Israel; and that whatever may be the result of this walk, we may be able at every step in our future pilgrimage, to say with one of old—*The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He*

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restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the path of righteousness for his name sake.

It has been already intimated, that it was not our design to follow any preconcerted or systematic plan in the walk before us, but to enter just such avenues, and pursue just such paths, as happened at the moment to be open before us, still, however, keeping on in our course *round about Zion*, till we had seen her towers, and palaces, and bulwarks, from so many points, that we might form a just and true idea of the whole, and *tell it to the generation following*.

If, in the view of any, it be considered a defect in the present work, that the various subjects touched upon, are not discussed with any special reference to dialectical order, it may also, perhaps, be regarded as an advantage that will, in some measure, compensate for this defect, that the materials, of which this volume is composed, coming from several different pens, and written in the familiar style of epistolary communication, will have something of the ease and freeness of colloquial discourse.

The following communication will call the attention of the reader to several points of interest, which it will be our business to examine and survey more minutely, as we pass on, and look at them from other positions. This letter was written by an Episcopal Clergyman to a friend, attached to another denomination, who had requested of him some account of the Episcopal Church:

"Dear Friend:

In reply to your communication, requesting of me some account of the peculiarities of the Episcopal Church, and proposing several queries in relation to its scriptural character, I would say, that it gives me great pleasure to furnish you with the information you desire. But before I touch on the subject of the Episcopal Church, let me look up to our great and adorable Redeemer, and entreat him to illumine my understanding with the brightness of his own eternal truth, and to fill my heart with the influence of his holy spirit—that my perceptions may not be clouded by prejudice, nor my feelings embittered by bigotry—that in this whole communication, I may not write a line or word,

"That dying, I would wish to blot."

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I am aware how apt, even good and holy men are, in vindicating their own peculiar denominational views, to become inflamed with a spirit of sectarianism. How well it would be, if all ministers were living so continually under the sweet, gentle, serene breathings of the Holy Spirit, hat what is said of Archbishop Leighton could be affirmed of them. Such was his kindness, and gentleness, and tenderness of heart and manners, that it is said, "*He would not have handled a rose-bud too roughly; a terrified bird would have flown to his bosom.*" Oh! that we had among us vastly more numerous and multiplied exhibitions of such patience, meekness, compassion, and sweet and affectionate mildness! But how often, when we begin to speak of our own particular church, does a deadly blight come over all the kindly feelings of the heart—and the lovely spirit of the gospel droops and expires beneath the scorching heat of sectarian zeal! I have often witnessed, and wept over, instances of this kind. I have been shocked to see those who ministered at the altar, desecrating the sanctuary of God by the violence of sectarian feeling, and by thundering forth, from amid sacred things, war and wrath upon their christian brethren who differed from them in some minor and unessential points: and the thought then occurred to me—how very different will those men feel, when they come to stand before the bar of Christ!

I fully believe there is an essential and everlasting difference between truth and error, and that all christians ought to contend earnestly for the truth. Yet should they seek to do it in a spirit of love and kindness towards those who hold error. My earnest prayer to God is, that I may say nothing in this communication that will savor of sectarian bigotry.

I am an Episcopalian; and one from conscientious conviction. I am just as much convinced that the primitive church was Episcopal, as that the church was established at Jerusalem, Antioch, and Ephesus. In my view, the whole testimony of antiquity is on this side of the question. But were not this the case, had the Episcopal Church no better claim to an apostolic origin than other protestant churches, I should be an Episcopalian.

The idea is rife in some places, and with some people, that Episcopalians, and especially the more spiritual part of them, are really ashamed of many things connected with their

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church, but that they continue to adhere to those things because they are so time-honored, and bear upon them the sacred seal of antiquity. The idea is indeed current among many, that the only defence that Episcopalians think of setting up for their church, is its *antiquity*. Now let me say, that these ideas are wide from the truth. Were it revealed from Heaven, that Christ did not establish in the beginning, any particular form of church government—that he left it to the christians of each age, to give it what form they thought most expedient, Episcopalians would, nevertheless, give a decided preference to the present form of their church, over all others. They believe that, on the ground of mere expediency, the very best mode of propagating christianity in the world, is through a christian body constituted as the Episcopal Church is.

I will presently glance at some of the peculiarities of our church, and give you a reason for them. Let me first, however, remove from your mind some false impressions that may be there. To form an idea of what the Episcopal Church is, you must not receive this or that man's opinion, whether he calls himself an Episcopalian or not, but you must learn, *what the Church is, by consulting her Articles, Homilies, Prayer-Book, and Canons.*—These are her standards. Various objections are often raised against the church, based upon entirely false premises. I will briefly advert to some of these.

1. You may have heard it said that the church is opposed to prayer-meetings; or at all events, to the use of extemporary prayer in social meetings.

This is not so. The church has never legislated upon this subject. She goes upon the liberal principle of allowing her ministers to pursue that course in relation to this matter, which they think will tend most to spiritual advancement, and the cultivation of a sound and enlightened piety.

Bishop Griswold, in his "Remarks on Prayer Meetings"—a work well worthy of an attentive perusal, on account of the candor and delightful christian spirit, that pervade it, says—"Laymen may conscientiously, with the rules and usages of Episcopalians, pray before any number of people in public or in private. If a clergyman be present, they should not lead the devotion in a church, or in a prayer meet

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ing, but at his request, or with his approbation. Their praying in these meetings extempore is no infringement of any rubric or canon. There are, frequently, occasions when propriety, and the interests of religion, and the honor of the church, all require that other prayers than those in our Prayer Book, should be used."*—These last remarks of course apply to other occasions than those of ordinary *public worship.*

Some Episcopal clergymen do, undoubtedly, sincerely think, that prayer meetings are attended with many evils, and they, of course, oppose the introduction of them into their own churches.

Others there are, who believe that they are a powerful means of keeping alive a spirit of piety and zeal among the members of the church. They, therefore, do all that they can in their own congregation to countenance and encourage prayer meetings.

Thus, the church wisely leaves this matter to the discretion of every minister, taking it for granted, that he will act conscientiously, and do what he supposes will tend most to the glory of God, and the good of souls.

The same remark may be made in relation to the use of extemporary prayer in social meetings.—Some prefer a form, and others think that the ends of devotion on these occasions, can be attained by giving utterance to their thoughts in the words that present themselves to their minds at the moment. I might adduce numerous instances, where clergymen of the Episcopal Church, who were thoroughly attached to the Liturgy, have been in the habit of promoting prayer meetings, in which the services were conducted altogether without a form. A case in point now occurs to me, and will illustrate my meaning. The biographer of Dr. Bedell, "whose praise is in all the churches," remarks of this distinguished and worthy minister of our church, that "no clergyman of the church more highly valued the Liturgy than he, and no one could be more regular in its use, as the form of public worship for the church. But, upon private occasions, and in meetings for social worship, he felt himself at liberty, and this liberty he always used, to lead the worship of others without a form."

* Remarks on Prayer meetings, p. 61. See also chap. 7th, 8th, and 9th.

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In connection with this remark, his biographer mentions the following incident:—"In the last public address which Dr. Bedell ever delivered at the meeting of any benevolent society, he offered the following resolution, the occasion being the meeting of the Bishop White Prayer Book Society:—"Resolved, that the lapse of ages has but tended to strengthen the conviction, that the Prayer Book is one of the distinguished excellencies of the church, to which, under God, is mainly attributable her remarkable exemption from false doctrine, heresy, and schism, in times past; and her prospect of unity, peace, and concord, for the time to come." In the course of his remarks, Dr. Bedell said:

"I have no objections to social prayer meetings, and extemporaneous prayer; but I have one curious incident to relate. A Presbyterian gentleman from Rochester, was once at a prayer meeting at my lecture room, and subsequently said to me,

'I have attended several prayer meetings of Episcopalians, and I do think that those who are pious in the Episcopal church, pray better than any people I have ever heard.'

"Shall I tell you my answer:

'My dear sir,' said I, 'Episcopalians have been so much in the habit of praying in the language of the Prayer Book, that they cannot make bad prayers.' And this is a fact. It is more difficult for a pious Episcopalian to make a bad prayer than a good one. Now, on all these grounds, this resolution expresses my feelings, and I heartily rejoice at the establishment of this society. I want to see the Prayer Book in the hands of all. It recommends our church where she is not known, and makes her more loved where she is already known."

You see, therefore, my dear friend, that while we are greatly attached to our Liturgy, we are not so exclusive as to reject, or decline using, extemporaneous prayer upon private occasions, and in meetings for social worship.

2. It is very possible you may have heard it objected to the Episcopal church, that she is opposed to revivals.

This is not true. You know that during the last ten years, there have been throughout the land, great religious excitements. In relation to many of these excitements, there has prevailed among christians of every de-

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nomination, a diversity of opinion. Some have supposed them the result of mere human management, and that the Spirit of God had little or nothing to do with them. Others have conscientiously believed that they were the work of God; but, like all other matters where human agents are employed, that they had connected with them, more or less of the alloy of human imperfection. The members and ministers of the Episcopal church, like the christians of other denominations, have entertained a diversity of opinion on this subject.

To set this matter, however, in its true light, it may be well to state in this connection what we mean by *a revival.* This term is sometimes erroneously applied to an excitement produced, not by the power of divine truth, but by artificial stimuli applied to the imagination and the passions.—Such an excitement could not be expected to result either in temporary or permanent good. I therefore need hardly add, that by a revival, we do not mean such a state of excitement.

Dr. Sprague, a Presbyterian Divine, in his lectures upon Revivals, remarks that,

"A revival of religion is a revival of scripture knowledge, of vital piety, of practical obedience." He also adds that "the term is intended to be applied, in a general sense, to denote the improved religious state of a congregation, or of some other community. Wherever you see religion rising up from a state of comparative depression to a tone of increased vigor and strength; wherever you see professing christians becoming more faithful to their obligations, and behold the strength of the church increased by fresh accessions of piety from the world, *there* is a state of things which you need not hesitate to denominate a revival of religion."

Bishop McIlvaine remarks, "that one of the great constituents and blessings of a genuine revival, is the *conversion of sinners.* But it is not the only object; though too much treated as if it were. The other is, *the quickening of the people of God to a spirit and walk, becoming the gospel.*"

Dr. Alexander of Princeton, describes a pure revival as being accompanied by such a state of religious feeling, that "the word of God distills upon the mind like the gentle rain, and the Holy Spirit comes down like the dew, diffusing a blessed influence on all around. Such a revival affords th

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A genuine revival contrasted with a mere excitement.

most beautiful sight ever seen upon earth. Its aspect gives us a lively idea of what will be the general state of things in *the Latter Day Glory*, and some faint image of the heavenly state. The impression on the minds of the people in such a work, is the exact counterpart of the truth, just as the impression on the wax corresponds to the seal. The convictions of sin are deep and humbling: the justice of God in the condemnation of the sinner is felt and acknowledged; every other refuge but Christ is abandoned; the heart is first made to feel its own impenetrable hardness; but, when least expected, it dissolves under a grateful sense of God's goodness and Christ's love; light breaks in upon the soul either by a gradual dawning, or by a sudden flash; Christ is revealed through the gospel, and a firm, and, often, a joyful confidence of salvation through him, is produced; a benevolent, forgiving, meek, humble, and contrite spirit predominates—the love of God is shed abroad—and with some, joy unspeakable and full of glory, fills the soul. A spirit of devotion is enkindled. The word of God becomes exceedingly precious. Prayer is the exercise in which the soul seems to be in its proper element, because by it, God is approached, and his presence felt, and beauty seen; and the new-born soul lives by breathing after the knowledge of God, after communion with God, and after conformity to his will. Now also, springs up in the soul an inextinguishable desire to promote the glory of God, and to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth, and, by that means, to the possession of eternal life.—The sincere language of the heart is, 'Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?'"

In contrast with this delightful state of things, I will here call your attention to a description of one of those excitements, to which the name of revival is sometimes erroneously applied. The sketch is from the pen of one of the most evangelical men of the age, the present Bishop of Ohio.

"Great scandal has been raised by indiscretion, and what I cannot call by any lighter name than *fraud*, on the part of some seekers of a revival.—The agency of the Holy Spirit, as the beginning and ending, has been, almost or entirely, set aside. A revival has been represented and sought for, as an article of manufacture, for which you have only to set the machinery, and raise the steam of excitement, caring little

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with what fuel, and converts will be made to hand. Artifices to catch the attention; devices to entrap the careless; representations to create impressions; an exaggerated style of preaching to produce alarm, to shake suspicious hopes, and raise a state of general excitement, no matter of what kind, so that it brings people to hear, have in some cases been put into requisition, over which truth, and reverence, and humility, and faith must weep, and which have done more to injure revivals in certain places, than all the direct opposition of coldness and unbelief. When the world and slumbering Christians see these things, it is not strange that they should speak against revivals. Blessed be God, *these things are not characteristic of revivals of religion*, but *only of some minds associated with that name.* In the great majority of what have been called by this name, they have not appeared, or have been only very partial exceptions to the general rule."

The Bishop adds, in the conclusion of his letter to Dr. Sprague, "The dangers and cautions I have suggested, arise out of the power and eminent value of the spirit of revivals. I owe too much of what I hope for, as a christian, and what I have been blessed with, as a minister of the Gospel, not to think most highly of the eminent importance of promoting this spirit, and, consequently, of guarding it against all abuses. Whatever I possess of religion, began in a revival. The most precious, steadfast, and vigorous fruits of my ministry, have been the fruits of revivals. I believe the spirit of revivals, in the true sense, was the simple spirit of the religion of Apostolic times; and will be more and more the characteristic of these times as the day of the Lord draws near."*

You see, from these extracts, what I mean by a revival—*an increased interest in, and attention to, the subject of religion through a congregation or community, produced by the power of the Holy Spirit, operating through instrumentalities, ordained or sanctioned by the Gospel, which God sees fit to employ and bless.*

After this explanation, I feel bound to affirm, that in reference to the subject of a revival of religion, whatever any particular individual within the pale of the Episcopal communion

* Sprague's Lectures on Revivals.

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may say to the contrary, the great design of the Episcopal church, in all her services, as may be readily seen by examining the Prayer Book and Homilies, is to promote a continued revival of religion. In illustration of this remark, just glance your eye over the exhortation, addressed by the Bishop, to those who present themselves before him as candidates for priest's orders. "Wherefore consider with yourselves the end of the ministry towards the children of God—towards the spouse and body of Christ, and see that you never cease your labor, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are, or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith, and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life."—This is the solemn charge which every minister receives previous to being invested with the priestly office. And you can well see, that if in every instance this exhortation were adhered to, there would be a systematic course of efforts unceasingly put forth to promote a continued revival of religion in all our churches. And I have great pleasure in saying, and would here record it, "to the praise of the glory of God's grace," that within the last three years, in a circle of sixteen Episcopal churches, in which my parish is situated, there have been, with two or three exceptions, revivals of religion in each one of these churches; and one of these has added, within that time, nearly three hundred members.

3. Again, you may have heard it said, by way of objection to the Episcopal church, that she does not approve of Bible Societies, nor participate in the great benevolent operations of the day.

This too is a mistake. It is true, the Episcopal church has not legislated in reference to this matter, but left her sons to follow the promptings of christian benevolence.

Some Episcopalians think it better to unite in Bible and Tract Societies, composed entirely of their own denomination. Others think that more good can be accomplished by throwing their influence and pecuniary means into the great national societies. Hence we find the names of some of our Bishops among the supporters and officers of societies auxil-

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iary to the American Bible Society. And again we find others directing the operations of associations made up exclusively of Episcopalians, banded together for the express object of giving more extensive circulation to the word of God. In reference to the path of duty in these matters, the injunction of the Church is, "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Upon the subject of missionary efforts, I must confess with shame, that, as a church, we have not done what we ought to have done. While our Prayer Book has ever been breathing forth a most holy and expansive missionary spirit, somehow or other we have not, till of late, inhaled that heavenly breath but slumbered on insensible to our obligations to the pagan world. But the cry of six hundred millions of Heathen, perishing for lack of knowledge, has broken upon our ear. Several students in our theological seminaries stand pledged to go upon foreign missions. Already have two ministers of our church embarked for the shores of China. And two of our missionaries have, several years since, planted the banner of the cross amid the ruins of Grecian glory,—and are now "teaching and preaching Jesus Christ," upon those classic grounds, where once stood the proudest temples of Heathenism.*

4. Again: You may also have heard it said, that the Episcopal church does not hold to a change of heart—that there is no vital piety, or true spirituality in the bosom of her children—and that her ministers do not preach the Gospel, but merely dole out cold, dry, prosing essays upon morality.

Now, I have no doubt that the course in many instances pursued by members and ministers of the Episcopal church, has furnished too just grounds for this allegation. But oh! what a departure every such instance was, from the spirit and standards of the church! And you might just as well condemn christianity unheard and unexamined, because the Papists fell into all the monstrous errors which characterize

* It may now also be added, that at our late general Convention 1835, the work of missions was declared to be the appropriate business of the church. Resolutions were passed declaring the church to be a missionary society, and every one within her communion, a member of the missionary society, and bound by the most sacred obligations to engage heartily and vigorously in this cause.

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the pseudo-form of christianity which they have adopted, as condemn the Episcopal church because some of her ministers and members have so sadly departed from the spirit of her standards—retaining the form of godliness while they denied the power thereof. I would ask, is it not so in all churches? Were it necessary, I think I could show, that the Episcopal church is not peculiar in this. We mourn over these things in our Zion, and thank God that a better day has begun to dawn upon us.

There has existed a special reason for this deadness in the Episcopal church. This church sprung from the Church of England. It was established in this country by the English. Consequently all the evils, incident to a union between church and state, were transplanted along with it. The moment the American Revolution broke us loose from the mother country, however, causes were put in operation to liberate us from those evils, which were manifestly incidental. Though in some parts of the country, even to the present time, a coldness and deadness have been perpetuated and have continued to sit upon our Zion like the incubus of death, yet now, almost every where, the church is throwing off every symptom of apathy, and putting on the vestments of strength, and standing up in the energy with which she was clad in the days of the Reformation, when she was baptised in blood, and placed herself in the thickest of the battle in protesting against papal usurpation. Every one now begins to see that the principles of our church are in most delightful harmony with the principles of a republican government.

But I will glance at each one of the particulars contained in the objection.

First, as to unsoundness in our views on the subject of a change of heart. No one can read our Articles or Prayer Book and think far a moment that there is the slightest foundation for such an accusation. If the necessity of a change of heart be not taught in the Prayer Book, it is not taught in the Bible.

Secondly, as to a want of vital piety and spiritual religion in the hearts of our communicants,—a word here may not be amiss. I fear we do indeed fall far short of the requisitions of the Gospel. I see it, and mourn over it in myself and my people. Oh! that we did live nearer to God! Oh! that we

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had more of the spirit of Christ! I hope all other churches have far more of that heavenly spirit than we have. It would give me real pleasure to find among them more spiritu ality, more heavenly mindedness, more devotedness to Christ than can be found within the pale of our communion. But as far as my acquaintance extends, I am led to think that we are not alone in these sad spiritual declensions. I see precisely the same things to lament among christians of other churches. Their ministers make complaint of, and mourn over, the same evils. I fear, that in this matter, we have none of us any thing of which to boast.

And, *finally*, as to the neglect of clear exhibitions of Gospel truth on the part of those who dispense the word—I have no doubt there have been some grounds for this accusation in times past. The doctrines of the cross in some congregations were not preached, and, very likely, were but imperfectly understood by those who attempted to guide lost and erring sinners to heaven. There may be individual instances where this is even now the case; where men, wearing the sacred vestments, are "blind leaders of the blind." And I presume that there is not a denomination of christians in the world, of which the same thing may not be affirmed. Such instances are truly melancholy, wherever they occur. I, myself, have sometimes been to the sanctuary, and heard, from the lips of him who professed to be an ambassador for Christ, nothing about Christ or salvation. What did I say? I am mistaken. The *sermon* had not a solitary ray of light reflected from the cross, but the *prayers* that preceded it, were full of *Him who was crucified on Calvary*. Episcopalians have an antidote by which they can counteract the deadening influence of such spiritless pulpit exercises. They open their prayer book, and immediately feel refreshed. The strains of devotion that they find there, have an unction from the Holy One. Every word is instinct with spiritual life.

Such a style of preaching as that just adverted to, is at perfect antipodes with the doctrines and spirit of every part of our liturgy. That is full of experimental religion—full of Christ—full of the doctrines of grace—full of the breathings of the Holy Spirit. So true is this, that we have known instances where persons have been converted, and led to the adoption of correct doctrinal views, with no other sanctuary

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privileges, than *our spiritual liturgy read* by a 'blind leader of the blind.' The Episcopal Service not only teaches the truth, but indirectly pronounces a most severe rebuke, and stern reprimand upon the man who reads it, if afterwards in his pulpit exercises he fails to proclaim the whole counsel of God. Only think of a dull, prosing preacher, first giving utterance to the rich, and spiritual, and highly evangelical strains of devotion embodied in our Liturgy, and then doling out to the people his jejune, miserable, moral essays! Why—the contrast would be such that no one could fail to observe the difference!

5. And finally, you have probably heard it charged upon the Episcopal church, that she has strong affinities drawing her towards the Romish church. But let the well known fact stand forth in bold relief, that no church in Christendom has protested against the usurpations of the papal hierarchy, with a more steady and unyielding testimony, or at greater expense, than the Episcopal church. Hundreds of her noblest sons have sealed their testimony with their blood. Can it be said in view of such men as Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, going to the stake to maintain protestant principles, that the Episcopal church, favors papal Rome? Let those who thus impugn the church, look into her Articles and her Homilies, and see if there be one of the protestant churches that has taken such high and decided ground against the pestiferous doctrines of Rome, as the Episcopal church. Her very frame-work* must be taken down, and her institutions annihilated, before she can assimilate with that mother of abominations, whose character has been delineated with such wonderful accuracy by the pen of inspiration.

I wished to call your attention to some of these popular objections, and to dispose of them before I attempted to give you even a cursory view of the frame-work and peculiarities of the Episcopal church. I wish you to understand, however, most distinctly, that we have no desire to exalt the church above the Saviour. We love her for no other reason than because we love Christ, and firmly believe this church is truly

* See the 6th, 11th, 14th, 18th, 19th, 22d, 24th, 25th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32d Articles of the Episcopal Church, all of which are constructed with a special reference to counteract some error of Popery.

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his spouse. Those institutions and arrangements connected with the church, which are of human appointment, unquestionably partake more or less of human imperfection. Her members and ministers are only frail men, and are, unquestionably, as liable to go astray as other christians. I ask you to judge of the church from an examination of her standards.

If she does not hold all the great doctrines of the cross in their integrity—if she does not exalt the Saviour, and make him all in all—if she does not place before her children a high standard of holiness—if she is not obviously that church which Christ bought with his blood, then I will not ask you to give to her any countenance. But if the Episcopal church can bear the test of the most rigid examination, and commend herself more and more to those who will take the trouble to look into her peculiarities, I am sure you will not regret the trouble of the investigation to which I invite you.

I will now proceed to give you a cursory view of the distinctive features of our church, and leave you to judge whether we can claim for it a scriptural and apostolic origin or not."

The conclusion of this communication will be found in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER IV

A PANORAMIC VIEW OF ZION

At last a voice all still and small,
Rose sweetly on the ear,
Yet rose so clear and shrill, that all
In Heaven and Earth might hear.
It spoke of peace, it spoke of love,
It spoke as angels speak above,
And God Himself was here:
For oh! it was a Father's voice
That bade his trembling world rejoice.

There is something striking, and peculiarly instructive in Elijah's interview with God at Horeb. The Lord passed by. But *He* was not in *the strong wind*, that rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks; nor in the *earthquake*, that shook the mighty fabric of nature to its centre. *He* was not in the *sheet of vivid flame* that shot across the troubled sky; but his approach was betokened by "*the still small voice.*"

Living in an age distinguished by the din and noise of action, and surrounded by numbers who seem to have a passion for continued excitement, and who, in reference to thrilling sensations of some sort, like "*the horse-leach's daughters, are ever crying, give, give,*"* we have the more reason to read over frequently, and meditate profoundly upon this account of the Prophet's interview with the Most High.† To the class of persons above referred to, who are ceaselessly seeking for something of an exciting character, we can promise nothing very inviting in the present chapter. The view to which we design to direct the eye of the reader, is not one that will be likely to strike powerfully the attention of those who run

* Prov. xxx. 15.
† 1 Kings xix. 11, 13.

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rapidly over each group of objects, and never *pause to study* or consider their separate parts.

I would also remark that, in a panoramic delineation, no one ought to expect to behold individual objects with the same minute distinctness, with which they would be seen, were they viewed separately and by themselves. Hence, the heading of this chapter should not lead the reader to anticipate that any thing more than a cursory view of the principle towers, and bulwarks, and palaces of Zion will be obtained from this point. Or, in other words, he should not expect to find in this chapter any thing more than a brief notice of the prominent doctrines held by the Episcopal church; together with some account of her ministry, discipline, and mode of worship. These are her towers, and palaces, and battlements. Let it be distinctly understood, however, that *Christ* is the only *high* tower to which we resort for eternal safety. The *Prayer Book*, which is full of Christ, we do indeed regard as one of Zion's strong bulwarks—*the doctrines of grace*, as her beautiful palaces—and Episcopacy, as a mighty bastion, to ward off the first assaults of radicalism and insubordination, that disorder and misrule may not rush in like a flood, to destroy the harmony and mar the beauty of the whole scene. The view we purpose here to give to the reader will be spread before him by means of the continuation of the letter with which the last chapter was principally occupied. It will be recollected at the close of that chapter, the writer avowed the purpose of proceeding to a direct exposition of the peculiar features of the Episcopal church. The letter thus proceeds:

"I know of no way in which I can do this so well, as by giving you the substance of a sermon which I heard a few years since. The circumstances under which I heard it were peculiar. It was in one of the vernal months, when the whole face of nature appeared clothed in the richest verdure, and the tenants of the grove sent forth a tide of melody, that seemed to make a fresh demand upon every passer by, to lift up his heart to God with new emotions of adoration and love, that I was privileged to make an excursion into the country to attend the consecration of a Church. The newly finished sanctuary had been erected by a farming community, and stood in one of the sweetest spots I ever beheld

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The consecration of a church.

The summit of a fine swell of land which overlooked on the one side a beautiful bay, and on the other, a far extended landscape had been selected as the site of this house, which had been built to the Lord. The edifice itself was a small Gothic building, neatly finished, and now about to be se apart to the worship of Almighty God. It was a delightful spectacle on the present occasion, to see the congregation coming from every direction, wending their way to the house of God. The sanctuary was soon filled to overflowing, and the religious services commenced, which seemed more than ordinarily appropriate on the present occasion. I suppose you are aware that in the Episcopal church, it is customary to consecrate the house to the Most High as soon as it is entered. The first thing we do, after having crossed the threshold, is to take possession of the building in the name of the God of Israel. The consecration service is very impressive. By means of it, a deep solemnity was evidently spread over the minds of the whole assembled audience. The effect was increased by the ordinary liturgical service that followed. Seldom have I seen a congregation apparently better prepared to listen to the preached word. The messenger of the Lord, who now stood up to address the attentive assembly, was in appearance, and intellectual power, no ordinary man. It would have feasted your soul even to have looked upon him. With a form erect and manly, with 'hair white as the driven snow' and a countenance on which was written, in lines that could not be mistaken, an expression of meekness, and gentleness, and lamb-like submission, and burning love for immortal souls, he would have reminded you of John, '*the disciple whom Jesus loved:*' And as he proceeded, you could not have refrained from thinking of Cowper's beautiful description—

> "There stands the messenger of truth: there stands
> The legate of the skies! His theme divine,
> His office sacred, his credentials clear,
> By him the violated law speaks out
> Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
> As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
> He establishes the strong, restores the weak,
> Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
> And armed himself in panoply complete
> Of Heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
> Bright as his own, and trains by every rule
> Of holy discipline to glorious war,
> The sacramental host of God's Elect."

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Need I now mention the preacher's name? Have you ever seen the Bishop of the Eastern Diocese? If so, I am sure you will instantly recognize the individual to whom this portrait belongs.

The edifice in which we were assembled, was, under God, the fruit of the labours of a pious and devoted missionary of the Episcopal church.—When he first visited this community, among whom he was now successfully labouring, he saw nothing but a wide moral waste around him on every side. The christian Sabbath was regarded as a holiday—Sunday Schools were unknown—vollies of profane oaths rolled as fluently from the tongues, even of children, as "common household words," and the victim of intemperance, with blistered lips, and blood shot eyes, stalked shamelessly abroad in open day.

"Amid this beauteous scene of nature, so full of moral instruction, God seemed to have been forgotten. But the preaching of the cross of Christ among them, was like Ezekiel's prophesying in the valley of dry bones. Around the man of God there started up a company of men and women, *created anew in Christ Jesus.* A change was visible through the whole community. A general effort had been made to erect a house of worship. And now enquiries began to be put forth in relation to the scriptural claim which the different denominations of christians could urge in their own behalf. Most of the people assembled on the present occasion were but partially informed in relation to the peculiarities of the Episcopal church. The preacher, therefore, very judiciously directed the attention of his hearers to this point while commenting upon the following text: *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.* 1st Pet. iii. 15.

"It pleased the adorable Author of our being," remarked the venerable preacher, as he cast his eye around over the audience, "to create man after his own image: to distinguish the human race from the other creatures of this earth, by the gift of reason, and a moral sense of good and evil. By this gift of intelligence, we become moral agents, and accountable for what we are, and what we do. By a right use of reason, we are to conduct ourselves, to judge, and choose, and act. He who made us, accordingly treats us as reasona-

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ble creatures and as moral agents. The revelations of His word and all His precepts and ordinances are addressed to our understanding, requiring of us a rational homage—a *reasonable service*. In the text now read, we are commanded to 'be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh, a *reason*' of our religious hope. We should be ever ready and willing, frankly to converse with people on the subject of christianity: to tell them what we believe, and *what* has convinced us—what reason we have for our faith and hope.

Some, we may fear, are christians merely from education: they embrace or profess the faith of their fathers; they unite with the church or denomination, and conform to the doctrine and mode of worship, in which they have been brought up, without much, and perhaps without any inquiry whether it is the doctrine which was once delivered to the saints; or whether their worship and discipline are according to primitive truth and order. They inherit the religion, as they do the estate of their ancestors, and because they do not *doubt*, they suppose that they *believe* it. From worldly interests, or from prejudice, or from some other undue influence, men may, and in many cases, no doubt *do* become bigoted to some particular persuasion. By the apostle, in our text, we are directed to avoid such evil. We are to make careful inquiry into the truth of what we profess and believe. When by searching the scriptures and the evidence of their truth, we are convinced that they are the words of God, we should endeavor also to understand their true sense, what we are to believe and what to do—that we may honor God and obtain salvation in Jesus Christ.

"And we are further directed to be always ready and willing to communicate to others, our knowledge of God and hopes in Christ. Talking freely on the subject of our religious hopes; of what God, in his mercy, has done to save our souls; and frankly imparting to others what are our views and belief of religious truths, will be profitable to ourselves as well as to them. We shall be mutually enlightened and strengthened. Many prejudices and wrong notions of what others think and what they teach will be removed. The want of this free and friendly intercourse among christians

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of differing sects is the cause of much censure and want of charity.

"Yet even in this intercourse which is so much our duty there is, from the frailty of our nature, some danger. When sincere and well-meaning christians, whose views are different, converse together on what they believe, a spirit of controversy is naturally excited. A zeal for maintaining their own creed and their own opinions leads to disputation, and that produces unkind feelings and passions, inconsistent with christian charity.—Against this danger, the apostle in our text has wisely guarded. While we give the reason of our hope, it is to be with "meekness and fear." Observe this, and there will be no danger of angry controversy. Meekness is one of the essential christian virtues. It characterizes the wisdom which is from above, and is among the fruits of the Spirit.

"When we communicate to others our religious tenets, we must not be dogmatical, self-confident, or overbearing, as though our notions were the standard of orthodoxy, and none can be right who differ from us: In our manner we are to be gentle, humble, modest, kind, and easy to be entreated, showing all due respect to the opinions and the feelings of others. We must be pitiful, and courteous, and tender hearted in all our intercourse with mankind, and never return railing for railing.—But especially in teaching or conversing on a subject so awfully important as the revealed will of God, and the redemption of mankind by his blessed Son, we should be not only "meek," but "should fear." Much reason in such cases we have to fear, lest we ourselves should be in error; lest we should not have correct views of the truth, as it is in Jesus Christ; lest in some points we should be ignorant, or mistaken, or influenced by prejudice; or lest we should say what is not true, and, like the friends of Job, offend God by our zeal in speaking for him. We should *fear* too, lest in disputing about religion, some angry or unchristian feeling should be excited in our breasts; lest we should not give our reasons with *meekness*, lest through some fault or carelessness, we would say what will injure, more than benefit religion. We must be ready and frank in communicating what we know and believe, and do it with "meekness and fear." It will tend much to the promotion of truth and fel-

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lowship and love, and to the diffusion of pure and undefiled religion.

"We are directed further to 'give *a reason* of our hope to every one who asketh.' Of course, the reason we give, should be accommodated to the case of each, who may inquire. You may be questioned on the subject of religion by those who do not themselves believe in any religion: to such people it will be necessary to show what evidence you have of the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and of the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ. You may show too, the purity of its morals; the noble view it gives us of the perfections of the Divine Being; and that it is the only religion which has had any good effect in changing the heart, and reforming the manners, and giving men a reasonable and sure hope of future blessedness. Should you be questioned by a Jew, on the ground of your hope, it would be most fitting to reason with him from the prophecies of the Old Testament, and their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. In giving reasons to any one, it is necessary first, to ascertain in what points he agrees with you, and wherein you differ.

"In the present state of religion among us, divided as christians are into many sects and denominations, we must frequently have occasion to apply the precept contained in our text in conversation with christians of various sentiments. An open, candid, and friendly communication of our religious hopes and views to each other tends to much good in several respects. It has the good effect of removing prejudice; it promotes love among all christian people, and has a tendency to make us all of one mind. Our reason tells us (what the scriptures command) that we should "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." If others differ from us in some things, we are all interested in knowing, and we ought to ask, and we may justly expect to be informed, why they believe and hold as they do. By such inquiry, we should, in many instances, learn things of importance, of which we were before ignorant: we may find, and most probably *should* find, that, in some things, other christians may be more correct than we. And on the other hand, if by inquiry it should appear that others are in error, we shall be better prepared to oppose or avoid it, as duty may require.

"There is a great deal of sin committed by christians, and

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Good resulting from a frank interchange of sentiments among christians.

much injury done to religion, by uncharitable feelings towards those of other denominations; by misrepresenting their doctrines and exciting prejudices against them. Many of us, I fear, have much to answer for in regard to this. St. Peter in our text puts us in a way to lessen this great evil. Generally speaking, the more we know the reasons others have for the hope that is in them, the more we become acquainted with their religious tenets, and with what they have to say in defence of their belief or disbelief, the less likely shall we be to misrepresent their doctrines;—the less likely even to censure them.

"Another great good resulting from such ready and frank communications among christians, would be, that the people would better know what their teachers believe. It would remedy an evil which we fear is not uncommon;—that of teachers with-holding, or concealing their real sentiments on some important points. We who pretend to preach Jesus Christ, and to be his ministers, ought certainly, above all things, to tell you plainly and very explicitly who He is; what his dignity and character; what he has done to effect your salvation; what is the efficacy of his sacrifice, and effect of his cross, and what you ought to believe respecting him. And you have a right, and it is indeed your duty, to require of us to be very clear and explicit on these most essential points. And we should all, both ministers and people, of all sects and denominations, endeavour to have a clear and definite understanding of what we *do* believe, and what our religious hopes are; and also to ascertain clearly and correctly wherein christians think differently, that we may be better able, not only to judge correctly, and think charitably of others, but to avoid what is erroneous and 'hold fast what is good.'

"That I may practice according to the doctrines I teach, I will now, the Lord permitting, apply our text, and the remarks which have been made, by offering some reasons of the hope that is in us of this church; what we believe, and what we hold respecting Jesus Christ and the christian religion. I shall now suppose that there is no question with any of us, but that the scriptures contain the revealed will of God, and a true way of salvation. I will endeavor in few words

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to show you what, in our view, and according to our belief, the way is.

"1. *In regard, first, to the natural state of mankind*—we believe, what a great majority of christians believe and ever have believed, that 'by one man sin entered into this world, and death by sin, and that death, in consequence, is passing upon all men.'—The disputes among christians about *total depravity*, which are often but strifes of words, do not affect the true doctrine taught in the scriptures.—Some men are much more wicked than others; and perhaps there is no one on earth so bad as he might be. But we believe that since Adam sinned, men, even the best of men, are, from the first dawnings of their moral sense, inclined to selfishness and sin; that in our nature there is no spiritual health, nothing perfectly good; till our minds are renewed by grace, we are considered, in the scriptures, as *at enmity* with God.

"2. *On the great and glorious doctrine of redemption*—we hold also with the greater part of christians, that 'God so loved the world, that he sent into it his only begotten Son, that all who believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.' He is called in the scriptures the Word, or the Wisdom. This word was in the beginning with God and was God. He was before all things: all things visible and invisible were made by him, and for him, and by him they still consist. This Word, we also believe, was made flesh, and dwelt among men on this earth. That he might become our Saviour and redeem us to God, he left the glory, which he had with the Father before the world was, and came into this world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He took our nature and became perfect man, and he taught by his example how man ought to live. As a man, anointed as our Prophet, he was enlightened in all divine things; while he had the feelings and all the sinless infirmities of our nature, the union with the Divine nature was such that it rendered what he did, as man, on our behalf, vastly meritorious. He tasted death for every man: his death upon the cross was sufficient to take away, and *did* take away, the sins of the world:—that is, he opened a way by which all men may obtain forgiveness, and acceptance with God. Having offered this one sacrifice for sin, he forever sat down on the right hand of God. In this capacity, as our Redeemer and Advocate with the

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Father, he is restored to that glory which he had with his Father before the world was. There are some denominations of Christians who think that Christ died but for a part of mankind—a certain elect number; but the doctrine of this our church is, that 'he is the propitiation for our sins; and not our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'

"3. *We believe also in the Holy Ghost;* that he is the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son, and of course the *Eternal* Spirit: that he is an existing, active agent, clearly distinguished in the scriptures from the Father and the Son: and that it is by this Spirit that God works in us, and directs, and strengthens us to will and to do what is good; and that, without the aid of this Spirit, which Christ by his merits purchased for us, we never could be and do what God requires.

"4. *We believe, too, in what are truly called the doctrines of grace.* Some give this name to speculative notions which we cannot find in the scriptures; and we think it would be wise to be less confident, than some are, respecting them. Our church has remarkably manifested her wisdom in her manner of speaking on intricate and mysterious subjects. She pretends not to be wise beyond what is revealed. All the great and distinguishing doctrines of the cross she decidedly holds and is faithful to teach. Such as the merits of Christ's sacrifice, and the agency of God's Spirit. We hold that 'it is by grace that we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves,—it is the gift of God,'—that it is the Spirit of God, which subdues the enmity of our natural hearts, and renews a right spirit within us. The necessity of a spiritual change, by repentance and faith, called a new birth, our church carefully teaches; and also that we are justified, or accounted righteous before God, not for our works or deservings, but for the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ accounted to us by faith; or in other words, that 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' He who knew no sin was made sin for us 'that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' But we do not make void the law through faith; rather we establish the law. The tree is known by its fruit: the evidence of a true religious faith is its renewing the heart, and producing the fruit of good living. The aid of God's Spirit does not take

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from us our moral freedom; but rather helps us to do God's will. It is because God '*works within us both to will and to do*,' that we can, and the rather ought, as St. Paul says, '*to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling*:' we have reason to *tremble* and *fear* lest there should be in us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. The doctrines of grace, according to our view, do not exclude the necessity of our own works, but their *merit* only. As we are sinners, and by God's righteous law condemned, we cannot, by our deeds, *merit* eternal life; all boasting is excluded from us: we ought rather to repent and to give all the glory of our salvation to Him, who is truly our Saviour. We must, therefore, maintain good works, but not trust in them; without such works faith would be dead. The very design or use of faith is to produce in us obedience to what the Gospel requires. And though we cannot change our own hearts, nor create ourselves again unto good works, we can use the means, which God has appointed; we can read the Scriptures, hear the Gospel preached, seek God by prayer, and other appointed means, and endeavor, according to the light and strength already given us, to walk in the way of God's commandments. And those who thus strive to obtain his salvation, he has promised to bless. Seek thus and you shall find: continue in this way to knock and it shall be opened unto you. These we view as the doctrines of eternal life, sometimes briefly expressed by 'repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.' They are clearly set forth in the standards of our church, and are generally, it is believed, taught by its ministers.—Of God's secret purpose of election and predestination, she speaks with reverence and discreetly; but respecting them, she prescribes no creed beyond what is clearly revealed.

"There are many christians who hold that there are seven sacraments: we receive 'only two as generally necessary to salvation: that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.' Sacraments are outward visible signs, of inward spiritual grace, and were ordained by Christ himself; and we endeavor carefully to avoid two opposite errors respecting them. One is, making too light of them, viewing them as little more than mere ceremonial rites, as many christians seem to do. The other is, making too much of them and

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exalting the outward ordinances, or visible signs, to a meritorious or efficacious act. Great numbers fall into this last error; they view the Lord's Supper as a real, and vastly meritorious sacrifice, the same as when Christ died on the cross. We view it as a memorial of that sacrifice, and an assurance to the faithful receiver that Christ died for him.

"Baptism, some maintain, always effects an actual inward change. Our church avoids such extremes: she teaches that it is our duty, in obedience to our Saviour, and the believer's privilege for his own comfort, to receive these ordinances; but that they have no good or salutary effect upon those who do not rightly receive or use them. The body and blood of Christ are spiritually taken and received by the *faithful* in the Lord's Supper: but if any receive this sacrament without faith and charity; without properly discerning the Lord's body, they are not benefitted. And the like we believe respecting baptism.

"From some expressions in our offices for baptism and confirmation, many have supposed that our church inclines to one of the errors just mentioned;—of believing that the inward grace always accompanies the outward administration: that they who are baptized with water, are, of course, inwardly sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and that we hold to no other regeneration or birth of the spirit. And it may be, that some few have inclined to this extreme. But the church is not accountable for the particular views of any individual: her doctrine is taught in her Catechism, Articles, and Homilies, where any one may read it. We hold what the church does teach, that baptism signifies or represents regeneration The inward part or thing signified by baptism, is "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." Baptism is hence called the sacrament of regeneration; and when we say that a baptized person is regenerate or born again, we mean that he has received the sacrament in which that grace is exhibited: that he has received the outward, visible sign of that inward spiritual grace. Of the heart we cannot judge: of what is actually wrought in the inner man; how far he is really sanctified, we do not pretend to decide. What we mean, and what we declare is, that 'baptism *signifies* unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died and

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rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin and rise again unto righteousness; or, as St. Paul briefly expresses it, we are buried with Christ by baptism, that as he rose from the dead, *we* should walk in newness of life.'

"There are two or three points in which we differ, and regret that we are constrained to differ, from several Protestant denominations.

"The first of them is Confirmation, or the laying on of Hands. This was practised by the Apostles, and we think was evidently intended to be of permanent use, and among the principles of the doctrine of Christ. From the writers of the second and third and following centuries, we learn that it was by christians generally so considered and so used: undoubtedly it has been used as of apostolic authority, from the apostolic days to the present time. Before the reformation, almost all christians received it as one of the Sacraments, and the Roman and Greek churches so consider it still. By us, we trust it is duly reformed, and used according to the practice of the holy apostles: and so far as we can judge from experience and observation, where it is solemnly administered and devoutly received, as every ordinance should be, it is very much blessed to the strengthening of christians in their holy profession.

"Another point in which we are constrained to differ from some of our brethren of the other denominations, is that which is usually called Episcopacy. In the Jewish church there were three orders of ministers, the High Priest—the Priests and the Levites. During our Saviour's ministry, there were three orders; himself the head—his twelve Apostles, and the seventy whom he also sent. In the apostles' days there were certainly three orders. The apostles were the first: the Elders (who were there also called Bishops,) were the second, and the Deacons were the third. Since the apostles' days all history agrees that this Episcopal government was universal in the church in every age and every country. I know not of any one thing in which christians, during all the first fifteen centuries, or down to the Reformation, were more uniformly agreed, than in the necessity of these three orders of ministers. No ancient church has been, or can be found, without this mode of government.

"The Church of Rome has very much corrupted the chris-

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tian ministry, by adding one order, that of the Pope, who usurps far greater authority than Christ has given to any, or to all of his ministers—authority which belongs to God alone. Since the Reformation, and within the last three hundred years, several denominations have arisen who have adopted different modes of church government. Some of them hold that Presbyters only have the right of ordination. Others, called Independants, or Congregationalists, formerly maintained that each congregation, or religious society has the power and right of ordaining their own minister. This mode of church government was held and practised by the first settlers of New-England. Each congregation, as a complete and independent church, ordained their own minister. Others still have rejected *all* ordination.

"It is, no doubt, the duty of all christians, after due and candid enquiry, with humble prayer, and being fully persuaded in their mind, to receive what they believe to be the truth of God. We are fully persuaded that what is called Episcopacy is so essential that it would be sinful in us to change it for any novel form of church government. The time will soon come, when it will be known who are right, and who are in error. And let us in the mean time be cautious how we judge each other.

"We differ also from others in conducting our public, social worship, by a Liturgy, or established forms. We do not suppose that this is essential to christianity; but we believe, for several good reasons which we have not time now to mention, that it is more suitable for public worship than the extemporary way, and that it is most agreeable to what has been the general practice of God's church from the days of Moses down to this present time. Our Saviour gave his disciples a form of prayer and commands them to use it, and of course, the use of the Lord's prayer is a part of christianity.

"Thus have I endeavored to give you, as the application of our text and subject, a brief sketch, or comprehensive view, of the hope that is in us of the Episcopal Church, as distinguished from other denominations. Though, at present, we cannot all agree respecting these things, we can and we ought, candidly to hear what is the belief and the hope of others: and also with meekness and fear, declare to them

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what is our own. By such wise and christian conduct, our very disagreement will be made profitable. It will make us more humble and more charitable; it will cause us more carefully to search the Scriptures and the history of the church in its early ages, that we may better know what the apostles taught and christians generally believed. That we may all be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life, may the Lord, of his merciful goodness, grant through our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ."

"I have thus, through the discourse of our excellent Bishop, in part answered your enquiry, and if what I here send you, shall lead you to pursue your investigation in the spirit that he recommends, I am sure it will result, not only in the attainment of valuable information, but in the advancement of your own personal piety.

Yours, &c."

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CHAPTER V.

EPISCOPACY.

"The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth."—COWPER.

We have already directed the eye of the reader to Episcopacy, as one of the strong muniments that add to the safety and glory of Zion. And as we linger a moment at this point, to *mark well her bulwarks* in obedience to the divine command, we are led to enquire at whose instance, and by what authority this battlement has been reared up to strengthen the fortifications of Zion? We shall find it necessary to go round about this bulwark and mark it well.

It may not be improper to remark that by Episcopacy we mean that particular constitution of the ministry, which recognizes three different grades in the sacred office—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

It is observed in the life of Dr. Bedell, a work to which we have already had occasion to refer, that that devoted minister of Christ had it in contemplation, just before his decease, to prepare a series of discourses on the subject of Episcopacy. We cannot but deeply regret, that his valuable life terminated before the accomplishment of this intended work. We feel confident that no man in the church could have done it with more success. Whatever he wrote would have been animated with a spirit of kindness and love to christians of all other denominations. And his known piety, acknowledged worth, and delightful manner of presenting truth, would have commended a work of this kind to the perusal of every class of readers. The church which Bedell, and Martyn, and Newton, and Scott loved—at whose altar they ministered, and in whose bosom they lived and died, is the church which

I wish the reader to examine. All I ask in relation to the distinctive peculiarities of this church is, that they may not be condemned before they are examined and understood.

The author cherishes the hope, that he himself may be animated with at least such a measure of the kind, and catholic and liberal spirit, which pervades all the institutions of this church, as not to write or spread upon these pages any thing that will appear harsh or unkind to any who truly love the Saviour. With one of her sons, who wrote in her defence, he would say:

"These sketches are not designed as polemical pieces. The author has no desire to enter the field of controversy. There are too many men of war already in the world, and he is determined not to increase the number. All that he requests from his readers is a candor of judgement, and a permission to express in public his own approbation of the peculiarities of that church of which he is an unworthy member. While he feels himself cordially disposed to embrace in the widely extended arms of christianity, all those of whatever denomination "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," he may surely be allowed, without offence, to give a preference to that church, to the doctrines of which he has solemnly subscribed his hand."*

In this chapter we design to draw the argument in favor of Episcopacy principally from a little work entitled, "*A candid examination of the Episcopal Church, in Two Letters to a Friend.*" We have not the pleasure of an acquaintance with the author of these Letters, but understand that they are a faithful history of the manner in which the writer's mind was affected by the successive facts that were brought before him in relation to the Episcopal church. We have taken the liberty of using such parts of these very interesting letters, as are adapted to our object.

"My Dear Friend,—

"You have expressed your surprise at what you are pleased to term my apostacy from the faith of my ancestors, in hav-

* Biddulph. See his Essays, p. 26. This is a most delightful work—written in a lovely spirit, and should be read by all who wish to see illustrated the spiritual character of our Liturgy.

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ing joined the Episcopal church in this place, and have requested me to give you a full statement of the reasons by which I have been governed in this, to you, unexpected and extraordinary proceeding. Convinced as I am of your candor and sincerity, and knowing that the discovery and support of truth are with you paramount to every other consideration, I am confident that you will not condemn until you have thoroughly and without prejudice investigated the subject, and that you will not the less respect my vindication of myself although it should be presented to you in the style of a plain and an unlearned man. I am sensible that I am not sufficiently qualified to engage in religious controversy, nor have I a wish to possess such ability; still I think it a duty incumbent upon every one, not only to examine and to think for himself, unbiased by interest or fashion, but to be able to give a reason for the faith which he has adopted.

"I was educated, as you know, a Congregationalist, and it was not until I arrived at the years of manhood, that I understood any thing of the various sects into which the Christian world is divided. I do not recollect ever hearing the Episcopal church mentioned, and I had no doubt, but that the only sure way to heaven, was that pointed out by the clergyman upon whose ministrations I always attended. His faith I considered to be the faith of the gospel; his explanations were to me authoritative and infallible, and it never entered my head that it could be possible for the church to exist in any other form, either as it respects discipline or worship, even to the minutest particular, than it appeared in the place of my nativity.

"At the time the Episcopal Society was established in this place, my ideas had, it is true, become somewhat enlarged; I had been in the habit of thinking more for myself, and the course of religious reading in which I indulged was considerably extended. I had learnt that a very small portion of the christian world was, in government or worship, such as I had been used to; and I even dared to suspect that my belief was not necessarily right, merely from the circumstance that I had received and encouraged it from my infancy. I found that religion, in all its parts, was to be supported by the sure test of scripture and of reason. In the course of my reading and conversation, I had also learnt that the divines of the

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Episcopal Church had been distinguished for their learning and piety; that the best systems of divinity, and the most useful dissertations upon the several articles of the christian faith and practice, had come from their pens; and I was not a little surprised to hear our ministers frequently quoting them as authorities in the pulpit, and to see their libraries filled with the books they had published.

"As I had become considerably acquainted with the clergymen in the neighborhood, I perceived too,that they expressed a good deal of dissatisfaction in regard to the government of their own church, and some would even go so far as to recommend and vindicate the use of forms in worship. This convinced me that there was something wrong in the system, though I could not tell precisely what it was, and from all that I saw, and heard, and read, I felt it my duty, as a man who was to give a strict account of the improvement of his talents, to examine faithfully and impartially the nature of the Episcopal Church, when it was brought to my door, and to act according to my convictions. This examination I pursued to the best of my ability and opportunity, and the result has been a full and an unshaken belief that the government of the church by bishops, priests and deacons, is of ancient and divine institution.

"In my examination of the subject, I first made myself acquainted with the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in America. I also attended the worship of the Church, and although I was a little confused at the variety of form, yet there was an appearance of solemnity and engagedness in devotion, which was peculiarly impressive. My confusion I knew was owing to my having been used to a different mode, and did not therefore discourage me from a renewed attendance, until I was satisfied with the beauty and propriety of all. Every person will, I think, on first coming to church, especially if he has been acquainted with none but the Congregational mode, be unfavourably impressed with the service. The cause of which is, that he attends as a spectator, and does not perceive the reasonableness of the several prayers and praises which are intended only for pious and devout worshippers. They are not designed merely to be heard, but to be offered; and the humble Christian, who has long

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given vent to the emotions of his soul in their fervent strains, would deem it his greatest loss to be deprived of their use.

"After I became acquainted with the government of the Church, I considered first, whether it was good in itself, and calculated to preserve unity and peace. I had heard much said of the power of bishops and their infringement of the rights of the people, but I soon learnt that the charge was groundless, and that there was more true christian freedom in the church than in any other denomination with which I was acquainted."

I must here interrupt, for a moment, this narrative, to reiterate what the writer has just remarked. The Bishops in the Episcopal Church have no opportunity to exert arbitrary and despotic power. Their rights and duties are defined by legislative enactment: and the rights of the clergy, in the lower grades of the ministry, are secured to them by canon law.

I have often heard it remarked by intelligent and well informed christians of other denominations, and my own observation leads me to concur fully in the remark—"That no ministers enjoy so much real ecclesiastical independence, and freedom in all matters of moment, as the clergy of the Episcopal Church." Still, it is evident that with a certain class of people among other denominations, a contrary opinion widely prevails.

In some instances, the most strange and singular ideas are cherished in relation to the power of Bishops. A little incident which recently came to my knowledge, through a medium that must entirely exclude the possibility of inaccuracy, will illustrate my meaning.

In a place where the church previously had been little known, there commenced, through the united labors of several ministers of the Episcopal church, a revival of religion. The whole community were apparently awakened to consider the importance of eternal things. Many were then seen around the foot of the cross, who, up to that time, had been entirely devoted to the world. Age, bending with infirmities, and tottering under the weight of years—manly vigor, walking forth with erect form and elastic step—and youth, blooming and buoyant, with the freshness of young existence, gathered in one group around the mercy seat, to look up to the Lord of life for pardon and peace. For a while, all sectarian

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feelings seemed extinguished, and christians of every denomination joined in one anthem of praise to that Being who was putting forth such glorious displays of his grace and power. But, when the new converts began to agitate in their own minds the question, to what particular church they ought to attach themselves, a disturbing force seemed almost instantly brought in to break up this sweet harmony of feeling. It was natural for these persons, as they were awakened under the preaching of Episcopal ministers, to feel a desire to know something about the church to which they were attached. Numerous enquiries were therefore made in relation to the Episcopal church. No efforts, however, were employed to influence the minds of those who proposed these enquiries.—Information was placed before them, and they were then left to act according to what appeared to them duty.—This course led them to the expression of a decided preference for the Episcopal church. No sooner had this taken place, than the fires of sectarianism seemed at once kindled up and blown into a mighty conflagration, spreading and raging most furiously through the whole community. Great pains were taken to give extensive circulation to statements implicating the character, and piety, and doctrines of the Episcopal church.

While there prevailed, much excitement on this subject, a worthy member of the Presbyterian church had a long conversation with one of another denomination, who contended that the Episcopal church embraced every species of error and abomination. After the conversation had proceeded for awhile in a very animated strain, the one vindicating and the other impugning the Episcopal church, the Presbyterian remarked:

"Well, you must admit that there is one noble trait in the character of Episcopalians—they do not speak bitterly against other denominations. During all the preaching we have had here, we have not heard them utter one harsh or unkind word against any who love the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Do you not know the reason," said the person, who would have it that the Episcopal church was very corrupt, "Do you not know the reason? Their Bishop will not let them. They dare not speak against others without his permission."

"Well, then," responded the Presbyterian, "I most sincerely wish that all denominations had a Bishop; and we

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should thus be saved from an immense amount of evil speaking."

Would to God that Episcopalians were more truly entitled to the noble testimony borne in their favor in the case just referred to. If our Bishops had the power of suppressing the sin of evil speaking, it would be a prerogative which all the world would praise them for exerting.

But, as the author of the Letter remarks, the idea that Bishops in our church have committed unto them power which will enable them to interfere with the rights of the clergy, or the people, is altogether erroneous. The author of the Letter thus proceeds:

"The Bishop has the power of ordaining deacons and priests, after they have been suitably recommended, with the assistance of his presbyters; he confirms those who have been baptized; he consecrates chapels and churches, and when present, he presides in Convention. But he has nothing to do with the votes of a people in the settlement and support of their minister; the clergy only are subject to his advice and direction. All acts in relation to the church are passed in Convention, where the power of the Bishop is equal only to that of the presbyter, the deacon, or even the lay delegate.—He can prescribe no new service; he can make no alterations in the old, and in every respect there is the same check upon the Episcopacy, as is possessed in a civil view, by the legislature over the President. But there is a permanent and visible head to the church; there is an authority to which offenders may be brought; there is a bond of union which strengthens and supports the whole; and although all the Bishops in America can exercise no more power than a single presbyter or association of congregational ministers, there is, nevertheless, a source from which power emanates, and without which all would be confusion and anarchy.

"And let me ask you, my friend, whether it is not necessary, that to every body there should be a head? The church is a society which can exist only under a regular government, and how can this be administered without an authorized governor? And does not experience show that where all assume to be rulers in an equal degree, there is disorder and every evil work? What government ever existed long where

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there was not a due gradation in its officers? And how can it be expected, when mankind are so various in their tempers, passions, and pursuits, that one uniform course should be pursued, and the same end accomplished where there is no subjection and no control?

"From considerations like these, I soon became satisfied that the church was in itself the best mode of which I had any knowledge, so far as respected its government. It then became necessary to inquire whether it was agreeable to the will of God; for however useful and proper it might appear, still if it was contrary to his commands, I knew it must be rejected, and the views which I had entertained set aside as deceptions. To ascertain this, it seemed important to advert to the government which he himself established with the Jews, and here I found a striking similarity to the orders of the church, in the several offices of high priest, priest and levite. And is it not reasonable to suppose that where there were once types and emblems, there must now be the substance and reality? Although circumcision was no longer to be continued as a token of the covenant between God and his people, yet baptism was substituted in its stead, and for the same reason, the offices which had before prevailed must have something corresponding to them in the christian church; and what is there that answers to the high priest, if it be not the bishop—to the priest, if it be not the presbyter—and to the levite, if it be not the deacon? But the argument is not, as some have pretended, that there must of necessity be bishops, priests and deacons in the christian, because there were high priests, priests and levites in the Jewish church. It is shown from this, that a diversity and an inequality of orders are not contrary to the will of God, but agreeable to his own government; and until there is some express command to the contrary, I think, if there were no other reason, it is better to endeavour to imitate the divine conduct than to adopt the inconsistent and unprofitable inventions of men.

"But I did not rest my belief upon my view of the subject thus far considered. Although I found Episcopacy good in itself, and as I thought from the divine institution, agreeable to the will of God, I proceeded to discover, if possible, what government was established for the church by Christ and his apostles. The three orders we find existing while the

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Saviour was upon earth, consisting of himself, the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples. This seems an intimation at least, that he intended the form of government which had prevailed among the Jews to be continued so far as related to the number and gradation of its offices; and after his ascension, it appears to me evident that the three orders still remained. Of the appointment of the deacons we have a particular account, and that they preached and baptized, whether as deacons or evangelists matters not; for their being deacons made them evangelists, and we have a history of their being solemnly ordained, by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, to the office of the former and not the latter. The term *evangelist* did not point out the nature of the office, but merely signified that the person to whom it was applied was a preacher of the gospel. In regard to the office of presbyters there is no question; and what is the testimony in proof of the superior order of bishops?

"All the apostles were bishops, and as such received their commission from Christ, and under his commission they could exercise equal powers, plant churches, and ordain teachers as they thought necessary. But it does not follow, that because they received but one commission and were alike authorized to perform all the duties of the Apostolical or Episcopal office, that the equality descended to all they ordained. We know it did not in regard to the deacons, for Peter and John went down from Jerusalem to Samaria, to confirm the converts whom Philip had baptized, which it seems he had not the power to do. And there are very strong circumstances, which shew also a difference in respect to presbyters. Timothy was the bishop of Ephesus; and I do not see how any candid person can read St. Paul's Epistles to him without being satisfied that he had the sole government of the church in that place as it respected the ordination and reproof of presbyters, and many things relating to the worship and conduct of the flock. Now, had the presbyters at Ephesus equal authority with Timothy? We read in the twentieth chapter of the Acts, that St. Paul called together the elders or presbyters of this church, and addressed them in the most affectionate language for the last time.—And is it not surprising that he does not say one word to them about the government of the church, ordaining, reproving,

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&c., when he never expected to see them again, and when according to the system of parity, this was as much their duty as it was that of Timothy? He tells them to 'feed the flock of God,' but to Timothy he points out the qualifications of those whom he was to ordain, and directs him to 'lay hands suddenly on no man.' Is there any reasonable person that can say Timothy was not superior to these presbyters? and if so, to what order did he belong, if it were not to that of Bishops? The directions given to him are such, as are followed by the bishops of the Episcopal church at the present day; nor do they, so far as I am acquainted, exceed the duties which he was commanded to perform; and so strong is the evidence from this particular, that it was said by a celebrated divine, 'that he who could not find a bishop in Ephesus would be puzzled to find one in England.'

"And the case of Titus is, in my mind, no less demonstrative than that of Timothy. He was sent to Crete, where St. Paul had previously established the gospel; and what was his business? 'To ordain elders in every city.' Was this the office of a bishop, or a congregational minister? It appeared to me the former, and I thought also, that as St. Paul was in great need of the assistance of Titus with him at that time, it was strange he did not direct him to return after having ordained two or three presbyters, enough to constitute a council, and leave them to ordain the rest, if they had the power; instead of which he himself was to go through the whole hundred cities of Crete. It seemed, also, probable that if St. Paul had been there before, and converted the island to christianity, he had left some presbyters; and if such were the case, why did he send Titus for the express purpose of ordaining elders in every city?

"A further testimony from scripture, in support of Episcopacy, I thought I perceived in the direction to the angels of the seven churches of Asia, in the Revelation. These angels I suppose were bishops, who had the jurisdiction over all the churches in the cities where they respectively dwelt. These were large places, containing many thousand christians. In the church at Ephesus were probably many societies, and consequently a considerable number of presbyters. Still, one person is addressed as the angel or bishop of the church at Ephesus, and so at Smyrna, Thyatira, and

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the rest. But if there were no distinct order of bishops superior to that of presbyters, all the latter were angels, and had equal power to reform abuses and confirm piety. The church collectively, as including all the different societies in a city, is called a candlestick, to which one star is attached. To me, this intimates, at least, diocesan Episcopacy, and seems in perfect agreement with the instances to which I have before alluded.

"Now, what is there to counteract all this scripture evidence and to establish congregational independence or parity? It is said that the words bishop and presbyter are indiscriminately applied to the same persons, and that Timothy was ordained *with* the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. But what does all this prove? In regard to the first, it is not the *name* but the *thing* for which the church contends. The word bishop, I am told, literally signifies an *overseer*, and may as well be applied to a presbyter as a bishop. The present bishop of New York is the overseer of his diocese as extending through the state, and the Rector of St. Stephen's or Christ's Church, is the overseer of his particular flock. But because one term is applied to both, does it therefore follow that they are equal in office? The presbyters of Ephesus were all bishops or overseers of single societies, but had they, therefore, the same power with Timothy, who had the oversight of them all? It is from the duties attached to the office, and not from the name, that we are to argue the superiority, and of those I think there are sufficient scriptural examples to set aside the doctrine of ministerial parity.

"In regard to Timothy's being ordained *with* the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, it is undoubtedly true. But St. Paul tells him he was also ordained *by* the laying on of his hands. And so every presbyter in the Episcopal church is ordained *by* the bishop *with* the assistance of his presbyters. This is, therefore, a circumstance in favor of Episcopacy rather than against it. St. Paul himself, as bishop, ordained Timothy, but there were elders or presbyters present, assisting him in the work, and these, for aught we know, might have been bishops or apostles.

"From the testimony of scripture, which is to me as clear as the light of day, I proceeded to the history of the church, and here I discovered such confirmation, as I

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should hardly think scepticism itself would deny. All the ancient writers speak of Episcopacy as the universal government of the church, and but one solitary instance of dissent is mentioned previous to the fourth century. Particular persons are also styled bishops, not of single societies, but of cities comprehending many churches, and thus forming dioceses, as the bishop of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Alexandria, &c. An author, who wrote in the beginning of the fourth century, gives a history of the church down to his own times, and names all the bishops, in succession, of four principal cities. And it is an indisputable fact, which even the greatest opponents of Episcopacy admit, that in two hundred and fifty years from the time of Christ the whole christian world was Episcopal, and so continued until the sixteenth century. And did Christ and his apostles establish Congregationalism or Presbyterianism which was so inefficient that no vestige of it was to be discovered after the short space of two hundred and fifty years? If this were the case, it is wonderful, it is miraculous that a universal change should have been so soon effected, and this too without opposition or notice. I find in ecclesiastical history an account of all the sects and heresies from Cerinthus down to Calvin, but I see no relation of a change from the original government of the church to Episcopacy. And yet in the beginning of the third century it was Episcopal in every country and in every society, throughout Europe, Asia and Africa. Can it therefore be, that any revolution actually took place? Is it possible that a few ambitious men should rise up against the great body of presbyters and take from them their rights, without meeting with resistance, their power of ordaining and governing the church? and not only this but assert, also, that they had always had this supremacy in one order from the foundation of the system? And who were these assuming men who aspired to the office of bishop, contrary to the word of God, and institution of Christ and his apostles? Their names are not given us, nor the time when they lived, nor the manner in which they accomplished their end. It is said that the change was gradual. But when did it begin and where was its progress? It aimed at the subjection of all the presbyters and deacons in the world, and it effected it too in the short course of two hundred and fifty years. This could not be by very slow degrees.—And in regard to

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The hypothesis of a change in the constitution of the ministry absurd.

ordaining, it was an assumption of power which must have taken place at once, and this could not have been done without opposition, and if opposition had been made we should now be able to find some record of it in history. It is indeed incredible. Such as the church was at the commencement of the third century, in regard to the nature of its government it was in the beginning, or Congregationalism was changed into Episcopacy by as great a miracle as that which was manifest on the day of Pentecost. But the burden of proof lies with the Congregationalists; and if they cannot shew that they had any existence in the church until 1600 years after its establishment, they must be content with the name of innovaters. And if they had, let them point out the time when and the place where. It was not in Jerusalem, for there James was the first bishop; it was not in Antioch, for from thence Episcopacy was transplanted to the East Indies, and has been continued in the Syrian Church discovered by Dr. Buchanan ever since.—It was not in Rome nor in Greece, in Spain nor the islands of the sea. Is it not passing strange, that we can point out the rise and progress of all other sects and denominations, while in regard to Episcopacy the farther we go back, the more extensive we find it, until at last it pervades the whole church, and we hear and read of nothing else from the establishment of christianity? Taking all these circumstances together, the propriety of the Episcopal government, its agreeableness to the will of God, its support in the apostolic age, and its universality for sixteen hundred years after, can you wonder at my having renounced the system in which I was blindly educated, and attached myself to that which is so ancient, so pure and so divine?"

In confirmation of the above views, I will here introduce an extract from a discourse of Bishop Griswold, recently published, entitled "The Apostolic Office:"

"It is often *affirmed*," says he, "but has never been *proved*, that the ministers of Christ were, at first, all of one grade and that the Bishops usurped the authority, which, it is acknowledged, they, in the early ages, possessed. But this is absurd, and altogether incredible. It is absurd to suppose that those, now called Bishops, made such a change. Because, if the government of the church was left by the Apostles in the

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hands of presbyters, *they*, the presbyters, must have made the change.

"On this supposition, there were no bishops to abuse power; *the presbyters usurped authority, and made the change.* If a thing so strange and so wicked was done at all, it was done by Presbyterians or Congregationalists. Those who advance this position virtually say, that within one or two centuries at most, after the government was put into their hands, they *all* in *every* country agreed in changing it to what Christ never intended. They certainly do very little honor to that mode of church government, by supposing it so defective and inefficient as to be so soon relinquished.

"It must, too, be difficult for us to believe, that, in the first three centuries, men should have been *ambitious* of the Episcopate, when its worldly advantages were so small, and its sacrifices and perils so great. *Martyrdom in those ages might almost be considered as annexed to a bishopric.* The general practice of the persecutor was to *smite the shepherd, that the sheep might be scattered:* the bishop was usually the first led to tortures and to death. How can we, in reason, believe that under such circumstances, so great a change should be made in the government of the church? that the holy martyrs of that time, which truly 'tried men's souls,' should either attempt, or desire to alter the institutions of Christ? And had such a change by some churches been attempted, it seems morally impossible that it should have become *general.*—And yet we are sure, from all ancient history, that *Epicopacy was general from a very early period down to the Reformation.* During the first fifteen centuries, it is not easy to name any one part of Christianity, in which *all* Christians were more generally united than in what we now call Episcopacy. Were we to admit that so great and material a change was made in our religion, without being recorded in history, we might well fear that other great changes were also made: that even the scriptures were altered. If *all* the churches would agree, in corrupting *one* part, why not in corrupting *another* part? In any part of the first three centuries, it would have been as difficult to produce such a change, as it would be in our day. And to me, certainly, such a change, so silent, so peaceable, and so general, without opposition, or any historical record, is a moral impossi-

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bility. Should there be any here who think differently on this point, they will not, I trust, regret having *heard what we think* on a subject which so much concerns us all. Nothing will tend more to unite christians in love, than candidly hearing from each other the hope that is in them. And, indeed, if differing denominations of christians are ever brought to *strive together for the faith of the Gospel*, it will be by their first uniting in *the government*, (whatever they may decide it to be,) which *God has set in the church*."

To return to the letter interrupted by this extract—The writer goes on to remark:

"Among the collateral evidences which have confirmed me in the belief of the apostolic origin of Episcopacy, there is nothing which has had more weight upon my mind than the history of the Syrian church to which I have before alluded. This little society was discovered some years ago by Dr. Buchanan, the celebrated missionary, in Asia, and traced its records back to the time of its establishment by one of the Apostles. For more than thirteen hundred years it had held no communication with any foreign church, and yet was found under a regular Episcopal government. Now, whence did it derive this if not from the original source?—It could not have been from the Greek or the Romish church, for it had never been connected with either until after its discovery by the Portuguese; nor did it receive the Episcopacy from England, a country of which it was altogether ignorant until Dr. Buchanan came amongst them. This church has since been visited by the American missionaries whose accounts do not materially differ from those of Dr. Buchanan.

"A similar argument may be produced from the history of the Greek and Romish churches, which, though in many essential points opposed to each other, have nevertheless always maintained Episcopacy. That the incumbrances of pope and patriarch should have grown out of it, furnishes no greater objection to it, than may be urged against Congregationalism from the circumstance that, according to the assertion of its advocates, this gave rise to an unscriptural prelacy.

"There is, also, a further consideration, which I must acknowledge has had some influence upon my mind. And this is derived from the fact, that men of the greatest eminence in talents and piety, have lived and died in the com-

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munion of the Episcopal church; and this too, when habits of education and motives of interest might have led them to espouse another cause. To what writers is the christian world so much indebted for learned expositions of doctrine and forcible persuasives to duty, as to Bull, Beveridge, Hall, Tillotson, Taylor, Seed, Secker and Porteus? To whom are we indebted for that translation of the holy scriptures which has so long withstood the assaults of infidels and heretics, but to members of the church of England? And who has not found his understanding enlightened, and his faith invigorated by the compositions of the pious Milner; the evangelical Cooper, and the devout Scott? I would not wish to be understood as desirous of having one rest his belief solely upon human authority; but as we must, in many respects, be dependent upon this, where shall we go with greater confidence, than to those who have been most distinguished for the ability with which they have supported and defended the revelation of God."

Perhaps we have lingered long enough at this point, in surveying this bulwark of Zion. In the next chapter we design to direct the attention of the reader to another of the outworks of Zion, which in our view adds not a little to her beauty and safety.

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CHAPTER VI.

FORMS OF PRAYER.

"There is no note on the harp of Gabriel more welcome to Jehovah, than the cry of a penitent for mercy, or the supplication of a child for grace." ROBERT PHILIP.

All that was absolutely essential to the temple built by Solomon, was divinely delineated in the plan he received from his father David. There were, however, several appendages to this stupendous fabric, that were left to be constructed, according as taste or utility might suggest. Hence, connected with the second temple, there were many things different from those which belonged to the *first*. Among these, I might mention the triple porch, that stood on the south side of the temple, that was in Jerusalem at the time our Saviour was on earth. Though in the first temple, porches, by divine appointment, were to surround the house of the Lord, we have no account of any, that bore the slightest similitude to this. This porch was supported by four rows of Corinthian columns, hewed from white marble, of immense diameter, and not less than sixty feet in height—resting on these as a base, it peered aloft into the heavens, till from its summit, the bottom of the valley below could scarcely be seen. Who could have stood and glanced his eye over this splendid piece of architecture, and not have been struck with the magnificence of this part of the vast pile that rose before him? And who would be prepared to say, that this triple porch did not add greatly to the beauty, and defence, and convenience of the temple. And so, in this our walk about Zion, should there meet our eye, some tower, or bulwark, or stately porch, in reference to whose erection there is no express divine command, we are not hastily to conclude that it has been raised up without good and substantial reasons. If it adds to the

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safety and defence and well-being of Zion, we are the rather to conclude, that its erection is in accordance with the will of God. Amid the bulwarks of Zion we meet with such a structure, in the Liturgy of the Episcopal Church. In our view, this liturgy is both a tower of safety—and a porch of entrance to the audience chamber of the King of Kings. We must then linger here for a while, and '*go round about it*,' and *mark well this bulwark of Zion*.

President Dwight, a well known and distinguished divine, of the Congregational Church, though a warm advocate for extemporaneous prayer, closes his discourse on the subject of forms, with these remarks:

"I have no controversy with those who think forms of prayer most edifying to themselves. Very many unquestionable and excellent Christians have worshipped in both these methods. In both these methods, therefore, men may be excellent christians, and worship God in an acceptable manner. On this subject, whether considered as a subject of speculation, or of practice, no debate ought ever to arise, except that which is entirely catholic and friendly; and no feelings beside those which are of the most charitable nature."

In the justness of these remarks we fully concur, and humbly hope that there will be nothing in this chapter, in discordance with the sentiments they inculcate.

Before we enter fully into the argument in favour of forms of prayer, however, we wish to offer two preliminary remarks.

The *first* is this,—that in advocating forms of prayer, and expressing our decided preference, of this mode of conducting worship, over that of extemporaneous devotion, our remarks are intended to apply simply to *public worship in the sanctuary*. We do not object to extemporaneous prayer in private circles, convened for the purpose of social worship.

And *secondly*, that in proposing, that public worship should be conducted by a prescribed form, we do it solely on the ground of *expediency*. Our views on this subject are entirely coincident with those of Mr. Paley, as expressed in his Moral and Political Philosophy.

"Liturgies or preconcerted forms of public devotion, being neither enjoined in scripture, nor forbidden, there can be no good reason for either receiving or rejecting them but that of expediency; which expediency is to be gathered from a com-

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parison of the advantages and disadvantages attending upon this mode of worship, with those which usually accompany extemporary prayer."

I have no doubt there are advantages and disadvantages connected with both these modes of conducting worship. We must, therefore, choose that which secures the greatest amount of good, with the least amount of evil.

One of the principal designs of public worship is to produce an effect upon *ourselves*. We do not expect to produce a change in the purposes of the unchangeable Jehovah. But when we come before him with right views—and express and feel the sentiments, which become sinful suppliants at the footstool of divine mercy, a change is wrought in us, which renders it consistent with the immutable principles of the divine government, to grant our petitions.

This is an important fact to be kept in sight while discussing the question before us—*the great design of prayer is to produce a change in ourselves.*

The devotional exercises of the sanctuary are intended to awaken in our minds a sense of our guilt, of our danger, of our necessity, of our helplessness, of our entire dependance, of our littleness, and of the greatness, and goodness, and wisdom, and power of our Maker, that our hearts may turn with earnest longings towards God—that our eyes may wait upon him, even as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters—and that we may thus be prepared for the blessing we need.*

Now that mode of worship, whatever it may be, that is best adapted to make such impressions upon the heart, and secure such results is, most indisputably, the best. The great question then is, by which mode can this effect be most invariably produced? We think by a precomposed form of prayer.

We have no doubt that under certain circumstances, all the ends of public worship will be most happily attained, where the devotions are conducted without a prescribed form. And could such a coincidence of circumstances always be calculated upon, we cannot say but that, on some accounts, we should prefer this mode of conducting public worship. But

* See Magee on the Atonement, vol. I, p. 104; also vol. II, p. 185. Dwight's Theology, vol. V. p. 75.

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here is the difficulty: and with us it is an insurmountable difficulty. Where you find this happy concurrence of circumstances in one instance, in ten other instances you will fail to find it: and in all those instances, the great end of public worship is not fully attained.

I will illustrate my meaning. If all ministers had that power of intellect, and that facility of expression, and readiness of utterance by which they could pour forth, on the spur of the moment, a strain of devotion as intelligent and edifying and spiritual, as that contained in a precomposed liturgy: and if they were always, when called upon to lead the devotion of others, in a truly devotional frame of mind, we should think that this mode of conducting public worship had some decided advantages over a prescribed form of prayer, though even then, in other particulars we should regard it as wanting decided advantages, which a prescript form of prayer possessed.

But there are several things here supposed, which we cannot expect to find in all those who minister at the altar. Not one in ten of those who minister at the altar can present their thoughts, in a form as correct, and impressive, and as well calculated to produce deep effect, on the spur of the moment, as if they had previously written what they had to offer.

Prayer is the most difficult kind of composition. The fact, that in the various manuals of devotion, composed by ministers of different denominations, we have so few good prayers, is a striking proof of the truth of this remark.

In further illustration of the same idea, I will here state an incident which is somewhat to the point.

A young gentleman, who was educated a Congregationalist, was spending some weeks at a watering place, shortly after he had been brought to a knowledge of the truth. It was at that early period with him in his religious experience, when the heart beats warm with the various emotions which swell and refresh it, in that new world of light and love into which it has been born from above. A young friend was associated with him on this occasion, who was just beginning the first exercises of his untried ministry. At this watering-place, the company, as usual, was blest with the presence of no small number of experienced and devoted clergymen, whose excessive labors rendered a visit to the springs indispensable to their refreshment and health. Among these was

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one of more than ordinary talent and distinction, from the far eastern sea-board, whose fervor of piety, depth of feeling, and copious, fervid flow of language, gave an interest and pathos to his devotional exercises, which are seldom excelled. In one word, it was the devout and heavenly-minded Payson. It would at any time, have proved a cordial to any one's more languid heart, to have followed the aspirations and breathings of his soul of fire, while he drew near the mercy seat to speak to the great God of Heaven.

One day the young gentleman above referred to, was invited by his clerical companion and friend, to accompany him to the lodgings of this man of God. It was an interview long to be remembered. They were both delighted with Payson's wonderful conversational powers, with the clearness of his mind, the depth of his piety, and the wisdom of his counsel. They conversed with him freely upon a variety of subjects connected with the christian life and the sacred ministry. Among other things, the young minister asked counsel of his more experienced brother, *how best he might conduct the public devotional exercises of his people.*

His reply was prompt and clear.

"There are but two ways"—said he—"a careful previous preparation, or no previous preparation at all. A few gifted men whose command of language is prompt and easy, and whose hearts overflow with devout affections, may safely forego all preparation, and venture upon public prayer with no other guide than the feelings of their own warm and pious hearts. Less favored and ready men, when unusually devotional, may sometimes succeed well in the same way. But when the heart is less sensitive and devotional than it should be, where utterance is not ready, and language does not flow with copious ease, the only proper, the only tolerable way, is to study and prepare every public prayer with the utmost attention. If, therefore, God has given you great and commanding talents, a ready flow of utterance, great power of language, a warm and devotional heart you may venture to lead the devotions of the congregation extemporaneously, but if not, you ought to study your prayers no less than your sermon." "I hope my clerical friend"—says the young gentleman in a communication from which I have drawn the preceding particulars, "derived lasting benefit, in his way

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The effect of Dr. Payson's views of extemporaneous prayer.

from these just and judicious remarks. The one I made o them was different perhaps from what either of these good men would have expected. Weighing them afterwards in my mind, I reflected that men of readiest utterance are not always men with most pious hearts; that in cases where these excellencies are united, the fervor of the spirit is unequal, and may falter and fail at the urgent moment of necessity; and that so overwhelming a proportion of ministers have little fluency of utterance, that it would be far wisest and best to require *all* to make careful preparation. Some soaring flights might possibly be restrained, but the average elevation would be greatly increased. I plainly saw, therefore, that preconceived forms possessed, upon the whole, manifest and great advantages. At this point I was constrained to ask myself, whether it was best or not, to entrust the preparation of these precomposed forms to the different individuals who are to offer them. Would they not attain higher average excellence, if written by the most able ministers?—Would they not be still more improved by selecting the most perfect parts of many of the ablest prayers which have been composed and offered in the Lord's house? To my mind the reply to these questions was so obvious, that I felt myself constrained to turn to the liturgy of the Episcopal church."

This was thoroughly examined. The examination changed all his plans for life. He became an Episcopalian. He went through a course of studies preparatory to the ministry. In the ministry of the Episcopal Church he laboured for many years successfully, receiving multiplied tokens of divine approbation. And he now bears the office of a Bishop, exerting a far felt influence in building up religious institutions, and extending the kingdom of Christ through our sin-desolated world.

In the view of the eloquent and talented Payson, then, it required no common powers to conduct public worship to the highest possible edification, without studied and premeditated prayer. And this corroborates the truth of what has been already said in this chapter, in relation to the certainty that in nine cases out of ten, the prayers of the public sanctuary would not be conducted to as much edification, by extemporaneous devotions, as by a precomposed form.

There is another idea worthy of attention which here sug-

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gests itself. In divine worship we desire to have our thoughts elevated, and filled with as large conceptions of the divine character, and of the riches and glory of redeeming grace, as possible.

There can be no question but that the public services of the sanctuary could be better conducted, and far more successfully to the certain attainment of the great ends of devotion, by men of large and lofty and commanding intellect, whose minds were filled and fired with the glories of redemption, than by those whose mental powers were small, their intellectual vision clouded, and their conception feeble. This conclusion, then, weighs strongly in favor of a form of prayer, to be composed by the loftiest intellects and warmest hearts in the church.

This idea, under a slightly different aspect, is presented in a striking manner in the editorial column of one of our religious periodicals.*

"When we use the forms of men of superior piety to ourselves, our minds are insensibly lifted up into conformity with a standard which is much above their own level. Who can estimate the amount of holy influence which the Lord's prayer has in this way exercised on the christian world? Who can use it without being conscious of a concentration of holy thought, a refluence of all excited feeling to the calmness of filial trust, and a lifting up of the entire soul to the serene and sublime devotion of the heavenly pattern. Does not the testimony of every age of the church—does not the experience of every individual believer, bear witness to the happy and reflex influence of a perfect model on the mind of him who uses it? And if such be the effect of a perfect model, must not a similar effect, differing in degree, but the same in kind, be consequent on the use of those approximations to a perfect model with which the spirit of God, through the gifts of his most eminent servants, has at different times blessed the church? Has not such an effect been produced to a very great extent by means of the inimitable collects and other prayers which constitute the liturgy of the church?"

From all these views, I feel compelled to give a decided preference to a precomposed form of prayer for public

* The Churchman for June 17. 1835.

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worship. The difficulty which has been already adverted to, is a serious and insurmountable one. I refer to the incontrovertible fact, that the great majority of ministers have not the power of conducting the public devotions of the sanctuary with as much effect and to as much edification extemporaneously as they could by a precomposed form.

The second difficulty is still more formidable.—Had all ministers that clearness and grasp of intellect, and that readiness of utterence by which they could, on the spur of the moment, offer the most eloquent prayers, every one who has had any experience in the sacred office, knows that there are times in which it becomes necessary for the minister to lead the devotions of others in the sanctuary, when he himself feels totally unfit for the duty.—His heart is cold, and he cannot succeed in bringing his feelings up to a truly devotional frame.—Under such circumstances, how unfit is he to lead the devotions of others by extemporaneous prayer! Will the cold and jejune effusions of his own mind be likely to fan the fire of devotion in the worshippers, or carry up their thoughts to heaven, and cause their hearts to kindle into seraphic fervor, that they may worship the great Jehovah in spirit and in truth?

But on the other hand, if public worship was conducted by a precomposed form, where every sentence was instinct with the fervor of devotion, even were the minister at the time in this dead state of feeling, as he proceeded in the service, his heart would be kindled into warmth, while the minds of the surrounding worshippers would be borne on the wings of devotion to the courts of high Heaven.

The difficulty above adverted to is not an imaginary one. A minister of unquestionable piety, and of no ordinary powers of mind, who is in the habit of conducting the public services of the sanctuary by extemporaneous prayer, has been heard to remark, 'At certain times when called to lead the devotions of the congregation, I have felt that I would have given any thing could I have been permitted to use a form of prayer.'

We cannot, therefore, but come to the conclusion, that in the great majority of instances in public worship, the effect produced upon the minds of the people, will be far better and

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happier, where the worship is conducted by a precomposed form.

To illustrate this subject more fully, I will now introduce to the attention of the reader, some extracts from the second letter of the writer whose narrative occupied the principal part of the last chapter.

"I now proceed, agreeably to my promise, to a vindication of the forms of the church, and I trust that I shall make it appear to your satisfaction that these are good and proper in themselves, and agreeable to the practice of the church in all ages. I had heard it frequently said, that in the reading of prayers there could be little or no devotion; and without much reflection upon the subject it seemed as if there must be some truth in the assertion. The custom was so different from that to which I had been used, and my mind was so habituated to an entire dependance upon the invention of my minister, that I did not dare to suppose that there could be any such thing as prayer, where the language was premeditated. The supposition even carried with it the idea of profanity and I was almost ready to condemn unequivocally and without examination.

"But when I attended upon the worship of the church, and noticed the appearance so different from that in congregational societies—every knee bent and every heart and voice seemingly engaged I could not but think that the spirit of supplication was there in a greater degree than I had ever before witnessed in any other place, and that if the blessing of God was ever granted to a human petition, it would not be withheld from those who manifested so much apparent fervency and sincerity."

I must here be permitted to interrupt the writer for a moment to say, that did we come to the house of God with the right dispositions of heart, the service of the Episcopal church furnishes us with the best conceivable means to inspire that high state of devotional feeling here described. But it is a lamentable fact, that men may put on the external apperance of great devotion, and have all the aids that can be devised to awaken devout feeling, and yet be mocking the Most High with mere empty show. This may be done either with or without a form. That most evangelical man, the Rev. John Newton, remarks:

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'It must not too hastily be taken for granted, that God cannot be worshipped in spirit and in truth by those who use a form of prayer, or that he will not afford those who so approach him any testimony of his acceptance. If the words of a form suit and express the desire and feelings of my mind, the prayer is as much *my own* as if I had conceived it upon the spot. On the other hand, if I have the greatest readiness and fluency in diversifying expressions, so that my prayer should always appear unstudied and new, yet if my spirit, or the spirit of those who join with me, be not engaged in it, though I may admire my own performance, and be applauded by others, it is no better than a mere lifeless form in the sight of him who searches the heart.'

I cannot but concur with the sentiment, which has been already expressed, that the attitude observed in prayer, and the part which the people take in the public worship of the sanctuary, gives to an Episcopal congregation the appearance of what every worshipping assembly should be—a Bethel—where constant intercourse is going on between earth and heaven. But to return to the letter:

"This, with some other circumstances, soon effaced my previous impressions in regard to the reading of prayers as the effect of early prejudice and led me to consider the assertions which had been made as the ebullitions of ignorance and bigotry. I found that there were some congregational ministers who were always in the habit of using a form; that whole associations united in publishing and recommending volumes of written prayers for the use of their people; and that family devotions in many instances were carried on in this way; and upon reflection, I could not consider the singing of psalms, as usually practiced, and without any doubt of its propriety, to be any other than praying to God and praising him by forms. These are precomposed in all congregations, and if a general union is intended in the part of worship which they compose, as they partake in a great measure of the nature of prayer, it seemed to me that what was right in the one case could not be wrong in respect of the other. Besides, I found that extemporaneous prayers on the part even of ministers generally fell at last into a form; and that indeed such they must always be considered in regard to those who join in the peti

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tions they contain. Public prayer, wether precomposed or extempore, is unavoidably a form to all by whom it is not originated, in as much as they receive words which are dictated to them; and if they are intent only upon their devotion it is impossible for them to determine whether the minister invents at the moment, or repeats from memory. I knew also that as respected myself, I had too generally been a hearer of prayer, rather than a devout worshipper, and the appearance of a great portion of the congregation intimated a similar condition on their part. I found that they were ready to criticise the language and style of prayer in the same manner they did the sermon: to admire every beauty of expression, and to applaud all the minutiæ of detail to which the occasion led.

"With these views, which satisfied me at once that there could be no rational objection to forms, even on the part of those who rejected them, I proceeded to consider whether they were not from the nature of prayer, and in order to the suitable edification of the people, far preferable to the extemporaneous mode. It is the design of public worship that the united wants and feelings of a whole congregation should be expressed. And how is this to be done unless some method be adopted of which there may be a previous general knowledge? and in the form and order of which all may agree.

"There is, I think, a great advantage in having a form of prayer for the whole church, as it constitutes a bond of union which cannot be broken, and tends to the preservation of the faith in its purity. Not only the members of one society or congregation unite in their prayers and praises to one common Father, but the same petitions and thanksgivings are ascending to the throne of grace from the church universal. And if Christ has promised to hear the requests of two or three when gathered together in his name, how much more will he grant their petitions when presented in the same way by the thousands and millions who kneel before his altar?

"That forms of prayer are of ancient and divine institution is to me evident from scripture. The first piece of solemn worship recorded in the Bible is a form—the song of Moses and the children of Israel, after the destruction of Pharoah and his host, which was first repeated by the men and afterwards responded by Miriam and the women.—

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Forms also were given to Moses and Aaron in the wilderness; one in relation to the atonement to be made for the expiation of an uncertain murder; another to be used when the ark rested, and when it set forward, and a third for the blessing of the people by the priest. Besides, the whole book of Psalms are forms of prayer and praise which were used in Jewish worship, and are still retained in the church.

"If we come to New Testament times, we find Christ providing a form for the use of his disciples, even as John also had taught his followers the manner in which they were to pray. He always attended the worship of the Jewish synagogue, which was carried on altogether by forms, and had there been any impropriety in the mode, he certainly would not have withheld his reproof. From the time of Christ and his apostles, forms in public worship were universal in the church until the sixteenth century, and the same arguments are to be produced in their favor from ecclesiastical history as in regard to the Episcopacy.

"When I had satisfied myself of the superior excellence of forms over extemporaneous prayers, and become convinced that they had prevailed in all ages of the church, and been sanctioned by the example and precept of its great Head and his apostles, as well as by Moses and the prophets, I proceeded to the consideration of the Episcopal Liturgy, which I found so rational, so comprehensive, and so well adapted to the expressions of public wants and feelings, that I could not for a moment withhold my approbation. The language is scriptural and solemn, the arrangement excellent and instructive, and it may well be said that in the prayer book, the bible is discovered in a devotional form.

"The morning and evening prayers are commenced by the reading on the part of the minister, two or three selections from scripture, intended to call the people to a sense of their condition, and to prepare their minds for the solemnities in which they are about to engage. Then follows an earnest *Exhortation*, setting forth the duty of the worshippers, and inviting all present to unite in a humble confession of sin, which is the first thing necessary when we come into the temple of God. We have no praises to offer, no favors to ask for ourselves or others, and no consolations or encouragements to receive from the holy writings, without first ac-

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knowledging our transgressions and sincerely supplicating for the pardoning mercy of God.

"After the *Exhortation*, in which the minister acquaints the people with the necessity and qualifications of *Confession*, they all unite, each one for himself, in bewailing their sins and imploring the forgiveness of their Maker. And if this confession be made from the heart; if this supplication proceed from a sincere desire of pardon, and be accompanied with strong resolutions of obedience, then are the people encouraged to hope that their iniquities are blotted out; and this encouragement is conveyed to them by the minister in the *Declaration of Absolution* which follows. He is authorized by that Almighty Being from whom he derives his commission, to declare that if they be truly penitent, their sins are forgiven; and on their bended knees they are to receive the joyful declaration.

"After this, as the restored prodigal, as the pardoned sinner, as the humble disciple, they are permitted to call God 'Our Father,' and to unite in that comprehensive form which Jesus Christ has commanded us always to use, and by which we acknowledge ourselves as his followers.

"After repeating the *Lord's prayer*, and in view of the great privileges received in the forgiveness of sins, and the permission through Christ to call God, *Father*, the whole congregation unite in solemn ascriptions of praise, the people performing their part as well as the minister his, and thus manifesting their common interest in the whole service.

"When the daily course of praises is ended, a *Lesson* is read from the Old Testament, which is followed by a hymn of thanksgiving with reference to the goodness of God, in all his revelations to the children of men, and including the most devout adoration of his righteous attributes. To this succeeds a *Lesson* in the New Testament, which is followed by another hymn of praise, called forth by a sense of fervent gratitude for the interesting truths of he gospel of his dear Son. And what can be more proper than, after hearing those truths which are able to make us wise unto salvation, for the whole congregation to rise and exclaim, with one voice, 'We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord,' or 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.'

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"Having heard the word of God as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, we proceed to acknowledge that our faith as Christians is founded thereon, and in union with the Church universal in heaven and upon earth, we declare the several articles of our belief as contained in the Apostles' Creed.

"Then having first petitioned for mercy and salvation, we proceed to the collects or prayers, which are arranged agreeably to St. Paul's direction to Timothy. '*I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and for all in authority,*' *&c.* The service, by being thrown into short collects instead of one continued prayer, is better calculated to keep up the spirit of devotion, and to prevent the mind from losing sight of the subject before it. Our natures are such that we cannot confine our attention to any one thing for a great length of time, and the variety in the devotions of the church is admirably adapted to afford that relief which the mind requires.

"In the morning service, the *Litany* or general supplication is introduced, which is the most solemn and affecting composition that can well be conceived. Throughout the whole, our appeal is to the divine mercy, flowing through Jesus Christ our Saviour; and in the language of Dr. Paley there is nothing which a christian petitioner can wish to ask or deprecate, that is not there expressed with admirable solemnity and simplicity.

"Indeed, I have found that pious and sensible men, of all denominations, speak highly of the Liturgy of the Church; and this of itself is a convincing proof that it is an excellent form of sound words; and I trust that there are thousands and tens of thousands now in the paradise on high, crying with saints and angels, holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts, and hymning praises to the Lamb that was slain, who knew no other services in the temple of God below than those in which the members of the Episcopal Church unite. They were compiled by saints and martyrs, prophets and apostles;—for many hundred years they composed the whole of the public devotions of the church, and they still remain, having escaped the corruptions of popery and the innovations of heresy pure and unadulterated. Cold then must be the heart, and

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lifeless the affections of those who cannot, in the worship of the Church, pray and praise with the spirit; who, in the prayers of saints and the hallelujahs of angels, cannot rise above this fleeting, transitory scene, and hold sweet communion with their God and Saviour.

"In vindication of the postures practised by the church in public worship, I need say but little to you. They are rational, significant and scriptural. In prayer, *churchmen* kneel after the example of Moses, and Solomon, Daniel, Paul and Christ. It is said by some, that the posture is of no consequence, provided the heart be right. But this in my opinion is incorrect and absurd, and if carried to its full extent, would destroy every appearance of religion. The same assertion in regard to one external may be applied to all the rest, and with equal propriety can it be said, that if the heart be right, it is no matter whether a person attend public worship, receive the sacrament, or perform all or any other outward duty, although prescribed by the law of Christ. In this, as in all other things, scripture is to be the test of propriety as well as of truth, and I do not believe we shall find in the Bible a single instance of a prayer being offered to God in any other posture than that of kneeling. It is true we read of some that *stood* and prayed.—Solomon was one of these. '*He stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel*' and prayed. '*And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying—he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with hands spread up to heaven.*' This then was his *standing*—not upon his feet but upon his knees, and as the word expresses simply a general disposition of the body, and not the precise posture, we may from analogy suppose, while the universal custom in the east confirms the hypothesis, that in every instance where *standing* is mentioned, *kneeling* was practised. The heathen kneel before their deities of wood and stone, and shall christians, when they address the God of heaven, shew less respect than pagans who worship at the statues of dumb and senseless idols!

"Standing in praise is a posture observed in the church. Prayer humbles us and brings us upon our knees in view of our own unworthiness; praise exalts us in contemplation of the perfections of that God whom we adore. In the one, a

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sense of guilt and the need of pardon are expressed; in the other, we give vent to the grateful emotions of the soul, and rejoice before the Lord our King.

"When the scriptures are read, it is the custom of the church to sit, which is the proper posture for hearing with attention, and one in regard to which there is but little difference of opinion.

"These are all the ceremonies of the church, and although they may appear strange and unpleasant to such as have always been used to a different mode, I trust they will be found, upon examination, proper in themselves, and agreeable to the will and the word of God.

"I will conclude this letter with an extract from the celebrated Miss Hannah More, upon the service of the church, and leave you to make your own comments both upon that, and upon what I have offered.

'"Most sincerely attached to the Church myself, not, as far as I am able to judge, from prejudice, but from a fixed and settled conviction, I regard its institutions with a veneration at once affectionate and rational. Never need a christian, except when his own heart is strangely indisposed, fail to derive benefit from its ordinances, and he may bless the overruling providence of God, that in this instance, the natural variableness and inconstancy of human opinion is, as it were, fixed, and settled, and hedged in by a stated service, so pure, so evangelical, and which is enriched by such a large infusion of sacred scripture. If so many among us contemn the service as having been to us individually fruitless and unprofitable, let us enquire whether the blessing may not be withheld because we are not fervent in asking it. If we do not find a suitable humiliation in the *Confession*, a becoming earnestness in the *Petitions*, a congenial joy in the *Adoration*, and a corresponding gratitude in the *Thanksgiving*, it is because our hearts do not accompany our words; it is because we rest in the form of godliness, and are contented to remain destitute of its power. If we are nct duly interested when the select portions of *Scriptures* are read to us, it is because we do not, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby. Perhaps there has not been, since the age of the apostles, a church upon earth, in which the public worship was so solemn and

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yet so cheerful, so simple and yet so sublime; so full of fervor, and at the same time so free from enthusiasm; so rich in the gold of christian antiquity, yet so astonishingly exempt from its dross. That it has imperfections we do not deny, but what are they compared with its general excellence? They are as the spots of the sun's disk, which a sharp observer may detect, but which neither diminish the warmth nor obscure the brightness.'

"These are the sentiments of a person, who, in the opinion of the serious of all denominations, has fought valiantly, through a long life, for the Lord her God, and who deserves for her labors in the cause of Christ the highest honors of the church militant. That they may have their due influence upon your mind is the ardent prayer of

Your affectionate friend and well wisher,

S."

I will conclude this chapter by adverting to three prominent excellencies in the liturgy of our church, which have not been particularly dwelt upon in the preceding remarks.

The first is, its conservative power. It is calculated to keep the doctrines of the church pure, and stand as an insuperable barrier in the way of fundamental error. On this point, a writer,* to whom I have already referred, remarks:

"Our Liturgy is not contrived, like Mr. Pope's universal prayer, to suit the taste of infidels and heretics. But its language on all the fundamental doctrines of christianity is clear and decisive. This circumstance, indeed, will not recommend it to those who have imbibed the spirit of the present day; in which indifference to all religious truth, misnamed charity and candor, has overflowed, like a deluge, almost every rank and order of men. Our reformers sought not to please men, but God. They sought not to gratify the pride of philosophy. They took care not to open a passage, whereby man's fallen reason might be exalted to the throne of judgment, while 'the oracles of God,' in a state of degradation, are placed at the footstool. Ease of conscience in those persons, who, while they pretend respect for Divine revelation, trample them under their feet, was no part of their concern. But the decisive language of our Liturgy will endear

* *Biddulph*. See his Essays, p. 26. 28.

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it to those who believe, 'that there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ.' Therein the doctrines of the Fall the Trinity, the Atonement and saving merit of Christ, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit are asserted in pointed and energetic terms.

"So clear and definite are the sentiments contained in the book of Common Prayer on these cardinal points, that every person in our assemblies, who verbally adopts and yet inwardly disbelieves them, is condemned out of his own mouth And should such a monster of duplicity ever arise, as an Arian, Socinian, or Pelagian clergyman, continuing such, he would be restrained by his own subscriptions and confessions from ever venting his heretical opinions, and thereby poisoning the minds of others, or would be obliged every time he appeared in the congregation of the faithful, to proclaim his own dishonesty. Let the enlarged minds of unbelievers condemn as much as they will, the narrowness of our creed, those, who are concerned for the honor of God and the welfare of mankind, will rejoice that we have such a barrier erected against the admission of those into the fold of Christ, whose business it is to 'steal, to kill, and to destroy.' Blessed be God, for the Liturgy of our church!"

The second point, is its variety. It has something to suit the wants of every class and description of people, and under all the circumstances in which they may be placed. On this point I may adopt the poetic language of Mrs. Hemans, and say, art thou a

> "Traveller in the stranger's land,
> Far from thine own household band;
> Mourner, haunted by the tone
> Of a voice from this world gone;
> Captive, in whose narrow cell
> Sunshine hath not leave to dwell;
> Sailor, on the darkening sea—"

here is an appropriate service in which you can

> 'Lift the heart and bend the knee.'"

The services are formed with a comprehensiveness that embraces "all sorts and conditions of men," has offices that are adapted to all the trying circumstances in which the human family are liable to be placed, and can furnish the fervid

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language of devotion which will be in harmony with almost every variety of feeling, which the christian experiences in the whole course of his pilgrimage from earth to heaven. In illustration of this remark, I will again introduce an extract from the author, to whom reference was just made.

"The variety of forms which occur in our liturgy, and their judicious accommodation to all our spiritual necessities, constitute another characteristic of its excellence. The compilation proves that the authors of it were well read in the present state of human nature. They were well acquainted with the fallen, guilty, corrupt, and helpless state of man, and with the glorious provision which the gospel makes for our present and eternal comfort. Is the christian worshipper oppressed in spirit from a recollection of his sins? Here are confessions of sin, and deprecations of the anger of God, that will adequately express his feelings; here are promises of pardon, that will approve themselves to his heart, by their exact correspondence with his wishes. Is he joyful in spirit? Here he is furnished with hymns of praise, that will describe in lowly terms the grateful emotions of his breast. We shall find it difficult to point out any situation of a public or private nature, relative either to our souls or bodies; but it is comprehended in our admirable forms."

There is one more feature to which I will briefly advert—*the Spirituality of our Liturgy.*

"The spirituality of our liturgy is another of its excellencies. Nothing is to be found therein to satisfy the conscience of the formalist and pharisee; but, on the contrary, every thing that is calculated to awaken attention to the necessity of the worship of the heart, communion with God, and real delight in his service. Herein we are taught that "God is a spirit, and that they who worship him aright, must worship him in spirit and in truth." The absurdity of the language of mere compliment, when addressed to Him, who searcheth the heart, is plainly pointed out; and the worship of our church is adapted exclusively to the use of those, who desire and expect to enjoy on earth, in the courts of the Lord's house, that which may afford them a foretaste of, and fit them for, more refined and exalted pleasures at God's right hand for evermore."*

* Biddulph's Essays, p. 29.

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CHAPTER VII

REGENERATION.

"Surely they that are not born again, shall one day wish they had never been born."

Archbishop Leighton.

I desire the reader for one moment to carry himself back in imagination eighteen hundred years, and to suppose the temple at Jerusalem now standing, and its walls, and towers, and gates, precisely what they were when the feet of the blessed Saviour trod the streets of the holy city. I desire that he will also for a moment permit me to suppose that we have commenced a walk for the purpose of surveying the temple and its environs. Already have we passed through a gate leading to the temple. In the entrance, we met with one of the tribe of Benjamin, and thus addressed him:

"Can you tell us what is the name of this gate?"

"Its name is *Beautiful*,"* said he.

We lingered and marked the peculiarities of the spot with great care and attention. This gate was perfectly unique. No other portal to the temple was like it. It was situated in the outer wall, on the eastern side, and splendidly ornamented with Corinthian brass—a metal in higher esteem than either silver or gold.† It equalled the sanctuary in height, which was more than a hundred cubits. Its folds were fifty cubits high, and forty broad, and were covered with plates of gold and silver.

We then left this spot and strolled through the spacious courts that surrounded the sanctuary. At length, after having gazed upon every part of this wonderous architectu-

* Acts 3, 2.

† Jahn's Bib. Archæology Par. 341. p. 432.

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ral pile, we felt almost mazed and confounded by the splendor and multiplicity of the vast and magnificent objects around us.—Scarcely knowing what course to take in order to retrace our steps, we met with one of the tribe of Levi, and said to him,—

"Can you tell us the way to the Beautiful gate?"

"Yes," he replied.

But, instead of directing us to the magnificent entrance through which we passed, after we had climbed our weary way up those numerous steps from the valley of Cedron, he led us to the west side of the Temple, and pointed to a gate, not more than thirty cubits high and fifteen broad, which connected the Temple, by means of a bridge over the valley below, with Mount Zion, and said—

"There is the Beautiful gate."

"It cannot be," was our reply. "This is not the gate we entered. It has none of the marks of splendor which characterized *that*, and is far inferior in height. We refer to the gate that is situated on the east side of the Temple, and the ascent to it is from the valley of Cedron."

"Oh!" replied the Levite, "you mean the *Magnificent gate*. That is the name of the great eastern gate. We call *this*, which leads to Mount Zion, *Beautiful*, and *that Magnificent*."

Now, although some confusion and inconvenience might arise from the supposed circumstance, that the individuals of two tribes, called a particular gate by two names, no one however, would argue from this, that one of those tribes did not admit the existence of that particular gate.

The foregoing hypothesis, has been stated to illustrate the folly of a controversy between different denominations of christians, in relation to the use and application of the term *Regeneration*. A difference of meaning is attached to this term. On one of the gates of Zion, some inscribe *Regeneration;* while others hang up on the same gate, the inscription *Renovation*. The latter write Regeneration over another gate; thus applying the term Regeneration to one, and the term Renovation to the other.

In the popular sense, the term Regeneration is applied to a change of heart, which is effected through the operation of the Holy Spirit, and accompanied with genuine repentance

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Diversity of views in relation to the meaning of Regeneration.

and evangelical faith. Whether this be the correct and ancient use of the term, or a new and modern application of it, it is no part of our object to enquire. This term, however, to the minds of some christians, conveys another meaning. They understand by "*Regeneration*," a change of state, or of relationship. They suppose that this term denotes the external act of translating one from the world to the church—from the state of an alien, into a new and covenanted state. These apply the term "*Renovation*" to the great moral change wrought in the heart of the sinner, when he is led to "believe to the saving of his soul."

Others there are, who apply the term regeneration to all that takes place in Baptism. As baptism is a divine ordinance, they suppose that divine influences are through this medium imparted to the soul. They pretend not to say what change is wrought, nor what benefits are thus conferred—but whatever they are, whether external or internal, they suppose the term regeneration expresses them all.

A third class, though they suppose that the term regeneration necessarily implies the idea of a new moral creation in the soul, also suppose that it implies the sacramental act of being washed by water, and that no person, in strict propriety, can be said to be regenerated, until he has been "born of water," according to our Saviour's explanation of the new birth—"except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

There are others, to whom this term conveys other shades of meaning. Now, because these christians use the term regeneration to denote these various ideas, have we on this account a right to conclude that they do not believe in the necessity of that spiritual change, to which, in common and popular use, the term regeneration is applied?—Certainly not. We might just as well argue that the Levite, in the supposed case above referred to, did not admit there was any such passage that opened to the Temple, as that of the Beautiful gate, because he applied that term to another gate, which led to Mount Zion, After all, this is a controversy about words, and did not the term regeneration occur in the Prayer Book, and was not the use of it there, made the ground of objection to the Episcopal Church, we would not spend a single moment in discussing what is its proper

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and legitimate application—for we can scarcely look upon such a discussion in any other light than as "*a strife of words.*"

In reference to the use of this word in our baptismal offices we cannot but concur in the sentiment expressed by the venerable Bishop of the Eastern Diocese, that "an alteration of some few expressions in our liturgy would render explanations less necessary, and would remove one great obstacle to the success of our labors." The very fact that so much explanation is necessary to render this word rightly understood, and that those who approve of its use, still understand it in so many different senses, constitutes in our view a reason why it is desireable that some other word should be substituted in its place, in an instrument constructed for such general use, and for so solemn and momentous a purpose, as that of admitting members into the Church of Christ.

What we shall principally attempt, by way of elucidating this subject, will be to show,

1. That whatever theories, different Episcopalians may adopt, in relation to the true meaning of the term *regeneration*, by none of these theories, or the holders of them, is denied *the necessity of a change of heart—the necessity of a new and internal moral creation, effected by the power of the Holy Spirit*, and having no *necessary* connection with *the act of baptismal washing.*

2. That whatever exposition is given to the term Regeneration, as it occurs in the Prayer Book, the use of it, as it there occurs, can be shown to be consistent with the doctrines of scripture.

The present chapter will be occupied in the illustration of the first of these propositions. The second proposition will be taken up in the succeeding chapter.

We are to show, that whatever theories different Episcopalians may adopt in relation to the true meaning of the term *regeneration*, by none of these theories, or the *holders* of them, is denied the *necessity of a change of heart* or of a new and internal moral creation, effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, and having no necessary connection with the act of baptism.

This position will be fully established, if it can be shown, that this great moral change has been insisted upon, as a doctrine of vital importance and as something having no

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necessary connection with baptism, by all the great and distinguished Divines in the Anglican and American Churches, who have used the Prayer Book as a proper ritual, both for conducting public worship, and administering the sacraments of the Gospel.

Dr. Miller, a Presbyterian Divine, who has been long known as one of the distinguished Professors in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, remarks in a recent publication that "nothing can be more certain than that the mass of the English reformers distinctly taught that Baptism is a *sign* only of regeneration,—that the thing signified, might or might not accompany the administration of the outward ordinance, according as it was received worthily or otherwise. In support of this assertion, the most explicit quotations might be presented from the writings of those distinguished martyrs and prelates—Cranmer, Latimer, Ridly and Hooper: and after them, from the writings of the eminent Bishops, Jewell, Davenant, Hall, Usher, Reynolds, Leighton, Hopkins, Tillotson, Beveridge, Burnet, Secker, and a host of other Divines of the English Church, of whose elevated character, it would be little less than an insult to any intelligent reader to attempt to offer testimony."* And I may also add that these men have in their writings every where taught the necessity of a spiritual regeneration—an internal sanctification, by which the heart is renewed, and wholly given up to God.

As a specimen of the doctrines which they held and taught, take the following illustrations.

Archbishop Usher, who died in 1656, says:

"Baptism is but the porch, the shell, the outside; all that are outwardly received into the visible church, are *not spiritually* ingrafted into the mystical body of Christ. Some have the inward grace, and not the outward sign: we must not commit idolatry by deifying the outward element"†

Bishop Hall, who died in 1656, thus addresses baptized persons:

* Miller on Baptism, p. 129. See also in further proof of this—"Baptism the Seal of the Christian Covenant," by Rev. T. T. Biddulph, also Christian Observer, vol. XVI. p. 388, and Christian Observer, vol. XV. p. 180.

† Usher's Body of Divinity. See pp. 183, 191, 192, 196.

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"If you find your hearts unclean, your hands idle and unprofitable, your ways crooked and unholy, your corruptions alive and lively, never pretend to any renewing: your are *the old men still;* and however you may go for christians, yet ye have denied the power of christianity in your lives, and if ye so continue, the fire of hell shall have so much the more power over you, for that it finds *the baptismal water* upon your faces."*

Archbishop Leighton, who died in 1684, says:

"Our adoption is not a mere extrinsical denomination, as an adoption among men; but is accompanied with a real change in those that are adopted—a new nature and spirit being infused into them, by reason of which, they are likewise begotten of God, and born again by the supernatural work of regeneration. They are like their heavenly Father; they have his image renewed in their souls. They have their Father's spirit, and are actuated and led by it. This is the great mystery of the kingdom of God, which puzzled Nicodemus; it was darkness to him at first, till he was instructed in that night, under the covert whereof he came to Christ.

"This adoption is sometimes ascribed to subordinate means; to baptism, called therefore the *laver of regeneration.* Tit. 3. 5. &c. But all these means have their vigor and efficacy in this great work, *from the Father of Spirits,* who is their Father in their first creation and infusion, and in this their regeneration, which is a new and second creation. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.*"†

Bishop Hopkins, who died in 1690, remarks:

"There is an external, relative, or ecclesiastical sanctification, which is nothing else but the devoting or giving up of a thing or person unto God, by those who have power so to do: And also there is an internal, real and spiritual sanctification, and in this sense, a man is said to be sanctified, when the Holy Ghost doth infuse into his soul the habits of divine grace, and maketh him partaker of the divine nature, whereby he is inwardly qualified to glorify God in a holy life Baptism is the immediate means of our *external* and *relative* sanctification unto God. The sanctification, regeneration, and adop-

* Bishop Hall's Works, vol. v. Sermon xx. p. 296.

† Leighton's Works, vol. i. p. 129.

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non, conferred upon us at our admission into the visible Church is *external* and *ecclesiastical*." And again:

"Baptism is not so much the means of internal and real sanctification, as if all to whom it is administered were thereby spiritually renewed, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost in his saving grace."

To baptized persons, who were living in impenitence, he addressed this language: "What! shall your names be in the register of Christ, and yet your souls be in the hands of the Devil? Will you carry his ensign in your forehead, and yet fight against him in his own camp? This is not only hostility, but treason: and as rebels and traitors are more severely dealt with than enemies, so shall you be; and believe it, the flames of hell burn the more furiously, for your being sprinkled with baptismal water."*

Bishop Burnet, who died 1715, says:

"We look on all sacramental actions as acceptable to God, only with regard to *the temper*, and *the inward acts* of the person to whom they are applied, and cannot consider them as medicines, or charms, which work by a virtue of their own, whether the person to whom they are applied, co-operates with them or not."†

Bishop Bradford, who died 1731, remarks:

"It is the way of the scriptures to speak to, and of, the visible members of the Church of Christ under such appellations and expressions as may seem at first hearing to imply that they are all of them truly righteous and holy persons. Thus the Apostles style those to whom they write, in general "saints"; speak of them as "*sanctified in Christ Jesus, chosen of God, buried with Christ in baptism, risen again with him from the dead, sitting with him in heavenly places, saved by the washing of regeneration.*" The reason of which is; that they were visibly by obligation, and by profession all this, which was thus represented to them, the more effectually to stir them up, and engage them to live according to their profession and obligation. But yet it is too evident from divers passages in their writings, and experience has

* See Bishop Hopkins' Works, vol. 2, pp. 418, 426. Also, Christian Observer, vol. 14, p. 588.

† Bishop Burnet on the 39 Articles.

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confirmed to us the same thing, that both in *their* times and ever since, there have been many who have enjoyed '*the washing of regeneration*' (or baptism,) whose tempers and manners have demonstrated that they were not also '*renewed by the Holy Ghost.*'

"What St. Paul says of the Jews may be repeated with respect to christians also, with a little variation of the words:

"'He is not a christian which is one outwardly, neither is that regeneration (namely, such as will be effectual to salvation) which is outward in the flesh; but he is a christian which is one inwardly: and regeneration is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter: whose praise is not of men, but of God.'

"God will not accept of men on account of their having complied with some external and ritual institutions, while they have no regard to the design of them. The institutions of Christ do not work like charms, but being appointed to be used by reasonable creatures, there is a disposition of mind in the person using them, necessary to the rendering them effectual.*

Archbishop Secker, who died 1768, remarks:

"When it is said that the sacraments, (Baptism and the Lord's Supper,) are means of grace, we are not to understand either that the performance of the mere outward action doth, by its own virtue, produce a spiritual effect in us; or that God hath annexed any such effect to *that alone:* but that he will accompany the action with his blessing, *provided it be done as it ought;* with those qualifications which he requires."†

It would be easy to extend these quotations from the writings of the more modern English Divines, but I will add nothing farther, except the remark of the Dean of Chichester, who, in England, in 1817, was regarded as one of the staunchest advocates for baptismal regeneration. He remarks:

"The inseparability of baptism and regeneration is a doctrine *falsely ascribed to the clergy.* No minister of the Episcopal Church ever did, or ever could really assert it. This doctrine is a foolish and papistical superstition."‡

* A Discourse published by the Society for promoting Christian knowledge.

† Secker's Works, vol. IV. p, 416.

‡ This is given as the substance of the Dean's remark. in the 16th vol. of Christian Observer, p. 391.

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To these English testimonies, I will subjoin three or four from American Bishops.

The Rt. Rev. J. H. Hobart, D. D. late Bishop of New York, remarks:

"In the offices of Baptism and also in that of Confirmation, the terms *regenerate* and *born again* are applied to those who are baptized. And this circumstance has given rise to the unfounded opinion that the Church does not maintain the necessity of any spiritual change, but that which takes place in baptism. It appears, however, from these very offices, that the Church does most strenuously insist, in the case of those who are baptized, on that 'renewing of the mind,' or that 'renewing of the Holy Ghost,' to which in modern times, the term *regeneration* is applied. The scriptural application of this term is to *baptism*. Thus the Apostle speaks of 'the washing of regeneration,' evidently meaning baptism, and as a distinct operation, 'the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Regeneration is always applied in the writings of the first ages of the christian church to baptism; and a different construction of this term in modern times, to denote a change of heart and life, has given rise to very erroneous opinions as to the view of the church on this important subject. By regeneration, she means a *change of state*, from our natural state in which we have no title to the blessings of the gospel covenant, to 'a state of grace or salvation in the christian church, in which we have a title, on the conditions or qualifications of repentance and faith, and evangelical obedience, to the privilege of pardon and grace, and eternal life which Christ purchased for his mystical body.'"*

In relation to the Bishop's theory, as to the meaning of the term regeneration, we at present have nothing to do. The purpose for which we have introduced this quotation is to show, that those Episcopalians who embrace the idea of a baptismal regeneration, mean by this something quite different from a change of heart—and that they most distinctly and steadily avow their belief in the necessity of this internal and spiritual change.

Bishop Onderdonk of Pennsylvania, who adopts the theory of two distinct regenerations, the *baptismal* and the *moral*,

* Companion for the book of Common Prayer.

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'most explicitly warns the careless member of the church, that his baptism does not imply, *that he has the new heart in any degree whatever*, or in any whatever of its elements."*

Bishop Griswold takes another view of the meaning of the term *regenerate*, but most strenuously insists upon the necessity of a change of heart, which may take place at, before, or after baptism. His remarks which follow, we are confident will throw additional light upon this subject.

"What we ought precisely to understand by the word regeneration, has been of late years much controverted. Among Christians, even the most learned, there is a diversity of opinion respecting a correct use of this word. Some view regeneration as having no connection with baptism, as the commencement of sanctification; in their view it is the change of the heart. The Scriptures, we know, teach nothing more clearly than that the heart must be renewed, created again unto good works; and this must unquestionably be the work of God's Spirit. None can with any reason pretend that this is effected by the washing of water. But they who hold to this spiritual regeneration may differ but little except in the use of words from others, who, by regeneration, understand *the change of state* which is effected by baptism. It is to be regretted that there should be a verbal difference among Christians on this point. It causes uncharitable disputation, and the appearance of great difference in doctrine, even where little or none exists. It has also caused a misunderstanding of the language of our liturgy. Some infer from it, that we believe in no necessary change of heart, but what is effected in baptism; and others, that no baptized person, though ever so wicked, can with propriety, be addressed as unregenerate.

In my view of this subject, it is by divine wisdom so ordered, that the sacrament which admits us into the Church and covenant with God, symbolizes or represents this new birth. Baptism strictly speaking is not regeneration; it is rather a sacramental representation of the new birth. But it is natural, and it is authorized in the figurative use of words to speak of this sacrament as being what it signifies or represents. It in time became common to speak of a baptized person as being regenerate, or born again. Sacramentally, baptized persons may be said to be new creatures; they have professed faith

* Onderdonk on Regeneration, p 12.

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in Christ, and promised to walk 'in newness of life,' and they have received the sacramental sign and seal of their covenant with God, and of their adoption to be his children. And if (in the language of our Church) 'they receive baptism *rightly*," they are not in appearance only, but truly 'members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of his heavenly kingdom.' But though they receive the outward 'washing of regeneration,' if they have not the repentance which is 'required of persons to be baptized,' they are not benefitted; they are still 'in the gall of bitterness.' Our article especially, and very truly declares 'that in such only as worthily receive the sacraments, they have a wholesome effect or operation, but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation;' that is, if they come to baptism without repentance and faith, their sins are increased instead of being washed away."

Again—"Our Church in her ministrations wisely follows where the sure word of God directs her. She also speaks of baptism as the washing of regeneration—as a religious and very solemn transaction, denoting the new birth; and without interrupting the solemnities of the sacrament with any suspicions of hypocrisy, in the language of that charity, which hopeth all things, and believeth all things, she supposes that the person or child baptized possesses, or through God's grace in a time accepted, will possess the requisite qualifications. The proper examination into the qualifications of those who are to be baptized should be at some time previous. During the solemn service, it would be less fitting to suggest doubts about the efficacy of the sacrament, or the sincerity of those who receive it. In ancient times these things were well understood, and our Church retains the language of former ages.

"In the present state of religion, there is, we have observed, some confusion in the use of theological terms: christians hear them, every one, 'in his own language, and in the tongue wherein he was born.' This makes it necessary for us frequently to give these explanations. An alteration of some few expressions in our liturgy would render these explanations less necessary, and would remove one great obstacle to the success of our labors. But till such alteration, by the permission of God, and the wisdom of his Church, shall

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be made, let us be careful rightly to understand her language, and to embrace her sound and scriptural doctrine."*

Bishop McIlvaine remarks, that "understanding by regeneration just what the Saviour meant by being '*born of the Spirit*,' and the apostles, by '*being made alive in Christ Jesus*,' or 'a new creature in Christ Jesus,' he, in accordance with a most 'glorious company of apostles, and a most noble army of martyrs,' and a most numerous and splendid retinue of pious, learned and dignified Episcopalians, professes the opinion, without the least hesitation, that there is 'no ground for believing, either from scripture, or from reason, or from experience, or from analogy, that the grace symbolized, invariably accompanies its appointed symbol.' It is not denied that such may *sometimes* be the case, but that it is *always* the case. The opinion maintained is, that regeneration may take place, *before, at, and after baptism*."

These copious extracts from the writings of some of the most prominent Divines connected with the Episcopal Church, both on this and the other side of the Atlantic, have been spread before the reader, to fix his attention upon *the fact* that among all the holders of these various theories in relation to the meaning of the term regenerate, the necessity of a change of heart through the operation of the Holy Spirit, independently of baptism, so far from being denied, is explicitly avowed and asserted.

Since then all Episcopalians declare their belief in the necessity of such a change, can an objection with any propriety be raised against the Episcopal Church on account of some peculiarity in the use of the word *regeneration?* After all, it is a mere controversy about the use of a word.—And perhaps we are not so peculiar in the use of it as some at first may suppose. Richard Baxter, a non-comformist, and the author of the 'Call to the unconverted,' and also of the 'Saints' Rest,' remarks,

"We are sacramentally buried and risen with Christ, as dead to sin, and made new creatures, when we are baptized, therefore it is called the *laver* of regeneration."

The Presbyterian "*Confession of Faith*" declares that "Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration," and that, although grace is not so tied to baptism, as that none can be

*Bishop Griswold's Sermons, pp. 215. 222.

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regenerated without it, or so that all are regenerated who receive it, or at the time of receiving it, "yet notwithstanding by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and *conferred* by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants,) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time."*

The Heidleberg Catechism, the standard of the Reformed Dutch Church, says—"The Holy Ghost calls baptism, *the washing of regeneration.*"†

The Platform of the Congregationalists declares: "By the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is really conferred by the Holy Ghost, and also that baptism is a sign of regeneration."‡

When different denominations of evangelical christians come to compare their standards with each other, in the spirit of kindness and love and are willing to lay aside pride and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder from godly union, and are ready to state to each other explicitly their views in relation to the various doctrines of the Bible, they will probably find a vastly greater coincidence in sentiment, than they at first imagined.

The present chapter will be concluded by an extract from a manuscript Sermon of Bishop Griswold, which he kindly permitted the Author to transcribe for insertion in this work. The sermon is upon the nature and necessity of a new birth.—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

After the introduction, the Discourse thus proceeds:

"That we may have a clear understanding of this very remarkable and very important declaration of our Saviour, I intend first to explain the terms here used: secondly, to examine the doctrine taught: and thirdly, to consider the improvement we should make.

First, then, we are to explain the terms here used:

1. The *Kingdom of God*, signifies his government over

* Confession of Faith. See chapt. 25, 2, 27, 2, 28, 1, 5, 6.
† Heid. Catechism. Question 73.
‡ Saybrook Plat. Chap. 29.

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his creatures. And it means here, as in many other passages of the Scriptures, his Church, or those of Adam's sinful race who submit to his government; who are in covenant with God, through Jesus Christ. Our text has regard to the distinction between the visible and the mystical church. The *visible* church includes those, who, in the sight of man, or to human appearance, submit to God's government: who receive the sacraments and observe those religious rites which the gospel requires. The *mystical* church includes them only, who are truly in heart and life, what God requires of those who would be saved in Christ; who have 'repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.' This is sometimes called the *invisible* church:* because men cannot see the hearts of each other, we do not know who, nor how many are possessed of these inward graces, which are necessary to our being justified and saved. But 'the Lord knoweth who are his;' whose names, in the language of his word, are written in the book of life; or, in the language of our church, 'are *truly* members incorporate, in the *mystical body* of his Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people, and are heirs, through hope of his everlasting kingdom.' Our Lord speaks of this mystical body, or invisible church, where he says, 'the kingdom of God is *within you*:' it 'cometh not with observation.' Our union with the visible church is *sacramental*: that with the mystical church is experimental.

"Of the former of these our Lord speaks in our text, when he says, 'except a man be *born of water*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' It is evident, and by almost all christians allowed, that this *birth of water* is the sacrament, Christ called baptism. It is called a birth for two reasons: and first, because it is our admission into the visible church; in a spiritual or sacramental sense, it takes us from the world into a new state; makes us visibly members of Christ. As

* "The church of Christ may be considered either as visible or invisible. The visible church of Christ on Earth, is a sort of people who profess the name of Christ and own his doctrine; joining together in a holy society and communion of worship, where it can be enjoyed. The invisible church of Christ on earth, is a number of true believers who have internal and invisible communion with Jesus Christ, by their faith and his spirit." Bishop Hopkins' Works, 11, vol. p. 418. See also vol 1. p. 83. See also Archbishop Secker's Works, vol iv. p. 327.

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St. Paul says, 'We are all baptized into one body:' 'As many of you as have been baptized unto Jesus Christ, have put on Christ:' We are buried with Christ by baptism unto death.' It is called a birth too, '*born of water*,' because it denotes a spiritual change,—a regeneration of the inward man. 'The thing signified is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.' Baptism with water, denotes too, the forgiveness of sin through the merits of Christ, and the operation of God's Holy Spirit. In the language of our church, 'the promises of the forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God are visibly signed and sealed in baptism:' and it is 'the *sign* of regeneration.' And accordingly, in the early ages of the church, baptism was often called 'the sacrament of regeneration.' St. Augustine observes, (in a passage quoted and approved in our Homilies) that the sacraments have a certain similitude of those things whereof they are sacraments, and therefore naturally receive the names of the things which they *signify*. As the Lord's supper signifies our communing in the benefits of Christ's body and blood, it is called *the communion*. And so as Baptism signifies our engagement to die to sin, and to *walk in newness of life*, it is called *a birth*; baptized persons are spoken of as being *regenerate*. But the birth of water is not all that our Lord makes necessary to our entering God's kingdom: it is required also that 'a man be born of *the Spirit*,' which undoubtedly means an inward change of the heart or affections. As the work is of God—as we cannot change our own hearts, it is called *the birth of the Spirit*, 'Born of water and of the spirit,' means what St. Paul expresses by the 'washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.'—Baptism is called 'the washing of '*regeneration*,' because as we have seen, it *signifies* regeneration. And our inward sanctification, or spiritual change is called the birth of the spirit, because it is the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*—it is by God's grace that we are converted and become 'new creatures.'

"2. Here, then, we see what is the *doctrine* taught in our text. We cannot enter God's kingdom, except we are born of water and of the Spirit. If by this kingdom we were to understand the visible church only, we may enter it by the birth of water. But our Lord is here teaching how we may

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be saved in him; how we may become truly 'children of the kingdom,' and 'elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.' He is showing what we must do and be, that we may be his disciples here on earth, and 'heirs, through hope, of his everlasting kingdom.' For this, we must not only be visibly in the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of God must *be in us*; we must be renewed in the spirit of our minds. If they who have been baptized, when they arrive at years of discretion, have not repentance and faith, and do not walk in the commandments of God, they are not 'living members of the church.' They do not comply with the requirements of the baptismal covenant, which is 'truly repenting, and coming unto him by faith;' they are like Simon (who had just been baptized) 'in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity;' and except they repent (which Peter exhorted Simon to do) they *cannot enter into* 'the church of the first born which are written in heaven.' On the other hand, many who have not been baptized, have repentance and faith, and we dare not deny that such may be saved in Christ; but we have not the full assurance that they will be saved.* There is not the token or appointed sign that their sins are forgiven, and that they are accepted of God, till they are *born of water*,—till they have received that sacrament which takes them 'into the fellowship of Christ's religion.' God's covenant with them is not visibly sealed; the promise which the Lord sends us to preach is, 'He that believeth and *is baptized* shall be saved.' If they who believe neglect to be baptized, their faith must be erroneous or imperfect: how far God may excuse their neglect, is not for us positively to say. It is enough for us to know that he requires both. Entering the visible church will not save us, without the birth of the spirit: and on the other hand, to say that our faith will save us, though we refuse to

* "The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper our church very charitably teaches us not to look upon as *indispensably*, but generally *necessary*. Out of which general necessity, we are to except those particular cases, where believers in Christ, either have not the means of performing their duty in respect to the sacraments, or are innocently ignorant of it, or even excusably mistaken about it." Archbishop Secker, vol. IV. Lect. 35, p. 481.

"Baptism is not of such absolute necessity as a means that none can be saved without it. We must distinguish between being inevitably deprived of the opportunity of Baptism and a wilful contempt of it." Bishop Hopkins, vol. II. p. 427.

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enter his visible church, is to make ourselves wiser than God. He requires both; and what God has joined together, it is not for man to put asunder. To be christians indeed;—to be in covenant with God, to be members of his church militant, and his church triumphant, we must be born of water and of the spirit; according to his merciful dispensation in Jesus Christ, he saves us by 'the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.'—Though we need no human authority to confirm the truth of God's word, it is pleasing to find how accurately our church receives what her Lord has taught. She is careful to urge upon her members the importance of submitting to the righteousness of God;—of receiving baptism; of becoming members of the visible church; that what Christ has ordained, cannot, without folly and peril, be neglected. And she is no less faithful in teaching the indispensable necessity of that renovation of heart which baptism represents. To the great injury of our church and hindrance of our labour, it is often said, whether from ignorance or unfriendliness I presume not to judge, that we do not teach the doctrines of the cross, and especially the necessity of a spiritual renovation: that we ascribe too much to the outward form, and too little to divine grace. But you who are acquainted with the standards of our church,—with her Catechism, and Articles, and Homilies, must know that she teaches, as clearly as language can express it, that neither Baptism nor the Lord's Supper *have a wholesome effect, except in such as worthily receive them*,—that they who receive them without true faith and right motives are not benefitted. He who comes to the Lord's Supper, without true charity, does not spiritually take and receive the body and blood of Christ; neither are we benefitted by baptism, except we have 'repentance, whereby we forsake sin, and faith, whereby we steadfastly believe the promises of God made to us in that sacrament.' Her twenty-seventh Article says that 'Baptism is not only a sign of profession distinguishing christians from others,' but is a sign of regeneration, or new birth; thus making a distinction between the *new birth* and a mere *change of state*. This Article says further, that 'the promise of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God, by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed in baptism:' that this sacrament is a visible repre-

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sentation of invisible things; and if it were not so, it would not be a sacrament. The person who *worthily receives* baptism has repentance and faith, and of course has a *new heart* and a *new spirit before he receives* that sacrament. The renewal is not *effected, but signified* and *represented*, in the sacrament. Before baptism, your sins may have been forgiven; but in baptism, that great mercy is officially declared—is visibly sealed. This sacrament too, like all other christian ordinances, when rightly used, is blest as a means of obtaining God's sanctifying benediction. 'Faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.' The right use of both sacraments tends to increase and confirm the *inward and spiritual* graces which the outward signs represent. Baptism represents spiritual regeneration, and not the less because the heart may have been renewed by faith, months or years before. It may too be, and we fear it not unfrequently is the case, that a person is baptized when he has not repentance and faith. If such an one should, years after, be awakened to righteousness, and turn to God, he need not, and he ought not, to be baptized again. He has been *born of water;* his baptism already received, has made him a member of the *visible* Church; and his conversion has made him a member of the *mystical* Church. And being thus born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, though the baptism was first, he may look back to that sign before received, as a comforting assurance of God's mercy and acceptance. If Simon, who was baptized by Philip, had, as Peter exhorted him, repented and been converted, he would not, we may well believe, have been re-baptized. In the case of infants, it may be that grace sometimes commences at the moment of baptism. In what instances it does so, and to what degree the child is sanctified, is known to God only, and is a point which I dare not decide. In adults certainly, sanctification should commence before baptism; and by a right use of the sacrament it will be *increased.* If like Simon, any are baptized while unrenewed in heart, how long God will wait for their *repentance;* and whether *the evil of their heart* will ever be *forgiven* is a subject of awful consideration.—This, I conceive, is the doctrine of our Saviour and of his church on this momentous subject. That the renovation of the heart,

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by the spirit of God, figuratively called a *birth*, or new creation, is represented, or symbolized in baptism, or the birth of water: but the thing signified, the actual change, may, and probably in most instances, does take place, either before, or after, baptism. And though it should never take place; though a baptized person should remain impenitent to the hour of his death, still God's mercy was exhibited to him in that sacrament. And if, on the contrary, he should repent and turn to God, he need not be again baptized. Such is often the case of those baptized in childhood, and sometimes of those who were baptized in riper years. In this sense it is, or according to this doctrine, that in our articles, baptism is called the *sign and seal* of regeneration: alluding to a deed of conveyance which is not itself the estate, but an *evidence* of property. So baptism is not itself the change it represents, but is a symbol of what we profess, and what we ought to be. As a deed may be executed with solemn formality, and yet through some defect or incapacity, the grantee may never possess the estate: so Baptism, though performed by an authorized minister, and in "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," will not save those whose hearts are worldly and their minds unrenewed. Although the church, in her Confirmation office, speaks of those baptized persons who come to that rite, as being born both of the *water* and of the *Spirit*, and of course that God has 'given them forgivensss of all their sins,' her own standards and repeated declarations clearly show that this language is used in the supposition that they who come to be confirmed are sincere; that they have repentance and faith, and intend, by God's grace, to *walk in newness of life*. This language of charity, in regard to the effects of baptism, is grounded on the gracious exhibitions of God's mercy in that sacrament. We pretend not to judge the heart, or to say positively of any one that he is actually renewed in the spirit of his mind, and his sins certainly forgiven: we mean rather to thank God for his merciful goodness to sinful men, revealed in his word, and sealed in Baptism. God is faithful, and his promise he will keep and perform. And in administering these holy ordinances, we proceed on the supposition that the person or child baptized, possessed, or in a time accepted, will possess the requi-

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site qualifications: and that they who are confirmed, sincerely intend, as God shall give them grace and strength, to fulfil their part of the baptismal covenant. This then is your Saviour's doctrine; that you should be baptized for the remission of sins;' and that your minds must be renewed by repentance and faith, before you can truly *enter his kingdom;* before you can be members both of the church visible and the Church mystical, and have a good hope of salvation through him.

"3. In our improvement then, first, let the importance of baptism be duly considered. Though the renewal of the heart is the most necessary, let us not pretend to be wiser than our Saviour Christ; he has given you no promise of salvation in him till you are born of water; and how can we reasonably hope that we are truly members of his mystical Church, while we refuse to enter his visible kingdom. His word which we are commanded to preach is, 'He that believeth and *is baptized* shall be saved.' You ought most thankfully to receive this sign of his pardon and acceptance, which God so mercifully offers. While you reject it, how can you be confident that you are accepted with him? While you remain unbaptized, God's covenant to save you is not sealed. We do not presume to say that God will not save you without the birth of the water; but you hear what your Saviour in the text says. If you are children of God without this sacrament, surely you are not *obedient children.*—Suppose, for illustration, you have a kind father who offers to give you an estate. In his intentions and good will it is yours; but there is no legal evidence of its being your property till a deed is delivered. Now if from day to day, and from year to year, you should refuse or neglect to take the deed, you could not say that the estate *is* yours. Such is the use of baptism. But there is an opposite error to be avoided. We must not be content with the outward form, but endeavor chiefly to obtain the *inward part or thing signified;* 'the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' By baptism itself we are, indeed, taught the necessity of this inward change. It *signifies,* as St. Paul says, 'that as Christ was raised from the dead, so we should walk in newness of life.' The evidence of our sanctification or change of heart, is our avoiding what is sinful; our love to

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God; our fear to offend Him; and our delight in his commandments: it appears too in our endeavors, while we live, to be doing good; in our love for the disciples of Christ, in our respect for his ministers, and all his institutions; in our thankfulness for his blessed gospel, and our charity towards all mankind, mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

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CHAPTER VIII.

REGENERATION.

"The sacrament of Baptism is neither an empty sign to them that believe, nor an effectual cause of grace to them that believe not."
Archbishop Leighton.

If the reader at the opening of this chapter is led to wonder, that in this walk about Zion, we linger so long before one of its gates, and still continue to gaze upward, trying to decipher the inscription upon the arch that stands over it, his wonder will cease when he recollects that our Saviour has said "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; *and few there be that find it.*" Our wish is, that none may be led to miss their way to the eternal city, by the uncertain or equivocal use of a word.

We fully believe that every human creature, that enters Heaven's gate *must be born again.* The whole human race, without a single exception, are conceived and born in sin—they are unholy, outcasts from the divine family—and deserving the everlasting displeasure of Jehovah. Not one of these, therefore, can enjoy his favor, till the heart is changed, and the moral nature renewed. This change can be effected only through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen in the last chapter, that "whatever various theories different Episcopalians have adopted in relation to the meaning of the term regenerate, by none of these theories, or by the holders of them, is denied the necessity of a new moral creation in the soul, effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, and having no necessary connection with the act of baptismal washing."

In the present chapter we are to show, that whatever exposition be given to the meaning of the term regenerate, the

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use of that term as it occurs in the prayer book, is not contradictory to the doctrines in the Bible. To the illustration of this proposition, we now invite the attention of the reader.

Objections raised against the manner in which the term *regenerate* is used in the prayer book, have special reference to the use of that term in the baptismal office for infants. For in relation to the service for adult baptism, and the office for confirmation, persons are spoken of there as "regenerated," from the fact that if they have the requisite qualifications to render them fit for the reception of these ordinances, they are in the state supposed—*truly regenerate.* "The public offices of a church must be in *general* terms. Neither the framers of the liturgy, nor the Priests who use it could speak positively of each baptized individual.. Our Church, therefore, in the judgement and hope of charity, whilst admitting persons into the visible Church, by the visible sign, speaks of them also as admitted by spiritual grace into the invisible Church; that is, it speaks *generally* of all the baptized, as being likewise regenerated."* Or, to use the language of a clerical friend to whom I am indebted for several valuable suggestions on this subject:—"Our public services are formed as all public services must be, upon a presumed state of mind and character in the people uniting in them, and can make no allowance for exceptions. When the words of confession and thanksgiving are placed in the mouths of the people, though on every occasion there may be instances in which the language is insincere, yet we cannot bring down the words to meet the actual fact, but must insist upon a state of mind brought up to meet the language employed. I know not how any extemporaneous prayers in connection with ordinances, can take any other ground. This applies to our baptismal services." We do not admit persons to adult baptism or confirmation, whom we do not consider as having exercised 'repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.' And we certainly ought to speak of such as being regenerated. The only plausible ground of objection to the use of this word in the prayer book, therefore, is where the term *regenerate* is applied to baptized infants.

* Christian Observer, vol. 16, p. 386.

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In the baptismal office, the following language is used—"Seeing now, dearly beloved brethern, that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning." And again "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant by thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church."

Now take any of the various theories that have been adopted in relation to the meaning and legitimate use of this term, and we think that the above language can be shown to be free from inconsistency.

For instance, if the theory be adopted, that regeneration as above used, means merely a *change of state*—or being brought visibly into covenant with God, no exception can be taken to the language of the baptismal office. For baptism is the divinely appointed rite of initiation into the christian covenant. According to this theory, the regeneration here spoken of, is external and ecclesiastical. Baptized children are said to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, because the whole economy and dispensation of the kingdom of Christ is managed by the Spirit of Christ. "Infants, therefore," to use the words of Bishop Hopkins, "are in baptism regenerated by the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Spirit of God appoints this ordinance to receive them unto the visible Church, which is the regenerate part and state of the world."*

Again: If *regeneration* be regarded as a term denoting all the benefits and privileges that are conveyed in the act of one's being brought into covenant with God—the new relation that he is thus made to sustain to Jehovah, the promises that thereby become appropriated to him—in short, all the advantages, spiritual and ecclesiastical—all the various influences, whatever they may be, which God intended should be imparted to those who enter into covenant with him, no exceptions can be taken as to the use of this term in the baptismal office. We, with many other christians, believe

* Bishop Hopkins' Works, vol. 2, p. 426

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that children ought to be dedicated to God in baptism. By this ordinance they are admitted into covenant with him, and by his appointment sealed as his children. We may thank him, therefore, for the whole work of mercy done and promised in this holy ordinance—a work, which according to this theory is denominated regeneration. And as they have been introduced into the covenant, in a way prescribed by the Holy Spirit, we may thank him, that by his Holy Spirit he has regenerated, or invested with the benefits of the covenant, the subject of that ordinance.

Once more: If regeneration be regarded as implying a change of heart, effected by the operation of the Holy Spirit accompanied by justification in the sight of God, and its necessary consequence—eternal salvation, we think the language of our service is still defensible.

To see this subject in its true light, it will be necessary to attend to the following considerations:

1. It must be remembered that the Episcopal Church takes for granted, that all infant children presented by believing sponsors are fit subjects for baptism, an ordinance by which they are introduced into the christian covenant."

2. It is evident that all who are *rightly*, that is, in accordance with God's will, brought through this ordinance into covenant with God, have conditionally ensured to them *all* the benefits of the covenant.

3. It is abundantly manifest that the principal blessing of this covenant is *regeneration*, or a new moral creation in the soul, which baptism itself symbolises or represents. Without this spiritual regeneration all the other blessings of the covenant will amount to nothing, but will only serve to heap up against the being placed under its bonds, "wrath against the day of wrath." If therefore the christian covenant entered into at baptism, secures the promise of any blessing, it is the promise of a renewal of heart—the change of the moral nature, by which we become the children of God.

4. There is no assurance, however, that this new moral creation, guarantied by the christian covenant, shall take place in the article of baptism.—"Infants may not receive any *apparent* benefits from baptism at the moment in which the ordinance is administered, although a gracious God may even

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then accompany the outward emblem with the blessing which it represents."*

But if He does not do this at the time, this ordinance places the child within the pale of the christian covenant, and in the language of one of the thirty-nine articles, "is a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church: the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed." Such an entire regeneration as this, therefore, is promised to those infant children who receive baptism *rightly*—that is according to the will and appointment of God. *When* this spiritual change is to take place, we know not. No one, at the time, can say it does not take place in baptism. Infants are undoubtedly capable of spiritual sanctification. The Savior himself declared, that regeneration, or being born again, was indispensable to salvation. If infants then are capable of salvation itself, they are necessarily capable of every thing which is an indispensable antecedent to it. It will not do, therefore, to say that infants are not capable of regeneration. Baptism is always a sign of regeneration, and inasmuch as it guaranties, *when it is received rightly*, by the very fact of its being a "seal of the righteousness of faith"—the blessing of spiritual regeneration, may we not with propriety speak of those who are baptized, as regenerate? Of course, if their first career as voluntary moral agents is begun in rebellion against God, as is the case with too many baptized children, we shall be obliged to conclude that they are still in a state of unregeneracy. Nevertheless, inasmuch as they have been brought within the covenant—inasmuch as its promises are conditionally secured to them—inasmuch as God has conditionally promised to them the blessing of regeneration, without specifying when it should take place, whether in baptism, or afterwards, is it not proper that the Church, laying hold of this promise by faith, and taking God at his word, should speak of what is sure to be, as though it existed already? I say, *what is sure to be:* For is not real and full regeneration, earlier or later, sure to follow this act of dedicating children to God, *if they are dedicated to Him according to his will*—and *the conditions annexed to the*

* Miller on Baptism. p. 57.

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promise of the covenant are complied with? And in forming a public service, is not the Church obliged to suppose in reference to those thus dedicated to God, that the conditions will be complied with? To call all baptized infants regenerate then, is nothing more than to speak in the strong language of faith. Does the Church in the baptismal office, then, do any thing more than use such language? And may she not do this on the ground that God is sure to fulfil his promises—and also on the presumed fact that all things will be as they ought to be on the part of those offering their children in covenant?

Is there nothing analagous to this, recorded in Holy Scripture, under the former dispensations of God with his Church? Take the case of Abraham. When doubts began to arise in the Patriarch's mind in relation to the possession of Canaan, God renewed his covenant to him under the most solemn circumstances, and immediately said, "Unto thy seed *have I given* this land from the river of Egypt, unto the great river the river Euphrates." Now I ask, might not Abraham at that moment with the greatest propriety, have fallen down before the Lord, and said, "I yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to give this land to my offspring. The lines have fallen to them in pleasant places; they have a goodly heritage?" Would there have been any impropriety in the use of such language? No. Though they did not come into possession of this country till four hundred years after: and though many of them through unbelief fell in the wilderness, and never came into actual possession of it; yet, inasmuch, as it was prospectively and conditionally theirs, there was no impropriety in saying that it had been *given to them—that they were the proprietors of the soil—that it was theirs.*

So in like manner, since God has promised full regeneration to all who are rightly given up to him in covenant, is there any impropriety in speaking of those who are presumed to be thus given up to him, as though this blessing were already theirs, and to thank God that he had conferred it? When the Church thus speaks of her children, can this be regarded in any other light than as the bright anticipation of faith? If children are fit subjects for the initiatory ordinance

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into the christian covenant, is not the principal blessing of that covenant—regeneration—as distinctly promised to them, as Canaan was to the decendants of Abraham? And if it was not improper to say that Canaan was the property of the seed of Abraham, long before they came into possession of it—can there be any palpable impropriety in speaking of the subjects of the christian covenant as though they were already in possession of the blessings of that covenant? It will not militate at all against the force of this reasoning to say, that most commonly, as far as we can judge, children baptized in infancy, exhibit no more evidence of regeneration than the unbaptized—and that thousands brought into the christian covenant in infancy, live and die in impenitence. This is not the fault of God, nor owing to any failure in his promise. Who is prepared to say that in one single instance among all those numerous cases where the blessing has not been realized, that the conditions of the covenant were complied with even on the part of parents? How many children are given up in covenant without the required faith? How many parents offer their children to God, and then take no pains to rear them "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Are not these implied conditions in the covenant? Will any one pretend to say that they can produce a single instance where children have been really given up to God *in faith*, and have been truly reared "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and have failed ultimately to become pious and holy? I am bold to say that I greatly doubt whether any such instance can be produced.

But were it otherwise, still our argument for the use of the term regenerate, applied to baptized infants, as describing a prospective blessing, or one of which they may be in actual possession, remains unshaken. The descendants of Abraham had an inheritance given them in the land of Canaan.—God spoke of it as already theirs; yet it is manifest that it depended greatly upon *them*, whether they entered upon the possession of it or not. We know that many of them did not, because of unbelief. "They despised that pleasant land, and believed not God's word," and consequently "their carcases fell in the wilderness." In like manner, how many baptized children there are that despise all the blessings of the cove

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nant, and "receive the grace of God in vain." Such we must warn, that double wrath hangs over them, and that they cannot escape, if they neglect so great salvation.

This then is our conclusion—that in whatever sense you understand the term regenerate, the use of it as it occurs in the baptismal office for infants in the Episcopal Church is entirely defensible.

In illustration of the idea, that children when given up in covenant to God *in faith*, and educated as though they were his children, will earlier or later become subjects of his regenerating grace, I purpose to call the attention of the reader to the following narrative sketch, some of the facts of which fell under my own observation, and those that did not, have been derived from a source, that ensures their entire correctness.

Twenty-five years ago, in a retired village in the eastern states, there stood amid a cluster of pines a small neat Grecian edifice, where the worshippers of the Most High weekly assembled to offer up their devotions. It was in the lovely month of May, on a Sabbath morn, while all nature was radiant with the beams of the great luminary, that hung resplendent in the heavens, that there might have been seen moving to that edifice, two parents with five children. The two elder sons were bounding along with all the buoyancy of young boyhood, full of life and spirits. The hand of the mother was leading a little one about two years old, while that of the father was guiding the steps of another that might have been twice that age. A domestic, bearing an infant neatly clad, and that was sweetly smiling as it gazed around upon the new scene, amid which it was borne, brought up the train. They entered the house of God. The service proceeded. At length a call was made, that the children which were to be baptized, should be brought forward. This family then rose and approached the baptismal font, to enter into covenant with God.

The scene was one of deep and absorbing interest. The parents felt that no transaction in which they would ever be engaged for their children could be more solemn or momentous than this. They fully realized that they were in the presence of Jehovah. They believed what he had spoken by the mouth of his holy prophet—"the promise is to you *and*

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your children." They considered that that promise did guarantee to the infant children of believers, who were rightly given up to God in covenant all the blessings of the covenant.

This act therefore of dedicating their children to God was with them no empty, thoughtless ceremony. For weeks they had prayed over this subject, and entreated God to prepare them rightly to offer their children to him in the way of his appointment. And now as they stood before the Lord with their little infant band around them, overshadowed by all the solemn considerations which the occasion was calculated to awaken, and presented one and another of their dear offspring to the man of God, to be sprinkled in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, they fully believed, that God would bless and save each one.

When they retired from the house of the Lord, and at night-fall gathered their little group around the family altar, they felt that their whole household had now been given up to God, and that they must live as a family that were preparing to dwell forever in his holy presence. With them religion was the main business of life. They now felt that they were under the most solemn obligations, to rear up their offspring as God's children. Had the child of a nobleman been committed to their care, to bring up, they would have endeavored to have brought it up, as a nobleman's child. And now that there had been committed to their care five of the Lord's children to bring up, they determined to bring them up, as the children of the Lord.

At the time to which reference has just been made, these parents had four sons and an infant daughter. The Lord subsequently blessed them with five other children, four of whom were daughters, and the youngest a son. These were all successively offered to the Lord in baptism. Perhaps the members of no family were ever happier in each other than were these. Naturally amiable and sweet tempered, religion was the great bond which united them by its sacred influences in harmony and love. Every day was begun and ended with God. It could hardly be conceived that in such a soil, and under such benign and heavenly influences, there could spring up rank immorality or open vice.—There were indeed no indications of this. The children were strictly moral in their external deportment, but still none of them evinced as

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yet any evidences of decided piety. When from day to day this happy family assembled around the domestic altar, an occasional cloud of gloom would come over the parents' hearts in relation to their offspring; for they believed that their children must be regenerated with the Holy Spirit in their moral nature before they could be truly the children of God. At such times, however, they would take hold of the divine promises, and stay their souls on the pledged word of the Lord.

These parents not only felt it their duty to pray frequently for, and with their children—not only to set before them a uniform example of piety, and give them pointed and practical instruction upon all the great truths of the Bible, but also to remind them of the relation in which they stood to God, as given up in covenant to him. In illustration of this I will here insert a note, which I received from Mr. R—— one day after having conversed with him, in relation to the blessing of God upon his offspring and the manner in which he viewed the subject of infant baptism. He fully believed that God would regenerate all children who were given up to him in faith, and were reared "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This idea he expressed fully in the conversation just referred to. Alluding to this, in the letter, he remarks: "With the views I have entertained respecting the rite of *infant baptism*, I have considered it an important duty, when my children have attained to years to understand the subject, to explain to them as clearly as possible the nature of the ordinance, as respects both *parents* and *children*. I have instructed them to consider, that they were made members of the visible church, and that there were great and precious promises made to them as such. I have taught them that it was a great blessing to be brought into the fold of Christ, and instead of being *strangers* and *aliens*, to be made partakers of children's blessings. But I have warned them of the danger of forfeiting all the blessings of the covenant through *unbelief* and disobedience. I have particularly at such times alluded to the confidence with which parents, who had so consecrated their offspring to God, could present them at the mercy seat in prayer; but I have warned them that no external rite, no prayers, nor tears, could save them without 'repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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There is another fact in this case, which I deem important.—In these views and endeavors, there has been a perfect agreement between myself and Mrs. R——. And I doubt if we have, either of us, at any time, lost our hold upon the covenant, with respect to our children.—We have, without doubt, had seasons of darkness, when faith has been very weak, but I believe it has never been extinguished."

Henry was the fourth son. It was he whom we described as being led at the time of his baptism to the house of God, by the hand of his mother.—He had now reached his fifteenth year. Through the admonition of a young friend, his mind seemed suddenly awakened to a deep sense of his guilt as a sinner before God. For many days he was greatly bowed down with the weight of his exceeding sinfulness. Notwithstanding the apparent blamelessness of his past life, he felt that his heart had been so turned away from God, that he could adopt as his own the lowliest expressions of confession, and say with one of old—"O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, for my iniquities are increased over my head, and my trespass is grown up unto the Heavens." But there was help in Israel concerning this thing.—There was indeed found in his case, balm in Gilead, and a physician there. The light of God's reconciled countenance was made to shine upon him, and he was enabled to rejoice in the Saviour's pardoning love with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Pious parents, who have seen a family of children growing up around them, without a single individual of them evincing any decisive evidence of being reconciled to God, and then have witnessed, when they least expected it, one of their number coming over to the side of the Lord, and exhibiting unequivocal manifestations of renewal of heart, can enter somewhat into the feelings of these parents on this occasion. Their hearts were indeed filled with joy and gladness, and the voice of thanksgiving and praise went up before the Lord, as incense, from the family altar.

Nearly three years had elapsed since the conversion of young H—, and during all this time he had manifested continual and multiplied evidences, that he was truly born of God. I ought perhaps to have mentioned before this, that Mr. R— in his earlier days had commanded a vessel, which in its va-

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rious voyages, had visited almost every port, and circumnavigated the globe. He had however, of late, retired from this business, and his sons were now coming forward to take his place. The eldest had already become the commander of a vessel. On a certain occasion it was so arranged that Mr. R— and young H— were going as passengers in his vessel on a short voyage. Some of the incidents of the voyage are alluded to in the following letter written by Mr. R— to Mrs. R—, the beloved mother of his children :—

"Beloved Wife,—

"You have undoubtedly, through Mr. S—, heard something of our situation after the *hard* gale, which we had on *Nantucket Shoals*. I shall only state briefly what occurred. After leaving G——, we had (almost continually) a gale of wind for twelve days. And at the end of fifteen days we left N——, and in just three weeks, we arrived at this place, without any damage, but with much hardship. Two nights and a day we were at anchor on the shoals, during which the wind blew so hard that we had great fears of losing our anchor, with but little prospect of saving our lives. A great deal of the time the vessel plunged the end of her *gib-boom* in the water. After that wind abated we got up our anchor, which was the next Monday after we left G——. The morning was pleasant, and we hoped for a pleasant voyage, but oh! how fleeting are all earthly promises of good! In a few hours another gale from the south-west attacked us far more violent than the former one, and attended with much more danger. We were about half way over the shoals. To proceed was impossible, and to return nearly so. If the vessel had struck, we must have perished. But God had mercy on us, and found out a way for us to escape. To give you any correct idea of our situation is impossible. I thought we might say with the Apostle, we were 'a night and a day in the deep.' After getting safe at anchor, we had a head wind all that week, since which our voyage has been pleasant.

"But I know that you feel anxious to know the state of my feelings and hopes, during that dark season. And I can speak to you on that subject, in more intelligible language. When we commenced our voyage, it was with prayer. I thought I could commit my *all* to that merciful Being, who

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had all my life watched over me, with more than a parent's care, and who had so recently granted me the the quickening influences of his Spirit, and by this, a new hope in my soul I did feel in the *darkest hours* a hope that we should make our voyage in safety. I did not for a moment doubt that it would end in the glory of God. I could not but hope that my *ship-mates*, especially my children, would receive some good impressions. At one time I thought it might be the purpose of God, that my life should terminate *there*. And in that view, I could not but magnify his goodness, in so turning my thoughts and affections from earth to heaven. I could easily perceive that God might make my death the means of quickening my christian brethren in N——. I could hope that it might prove the salvation of some, or all of my children.—With such considerations, and with most appalling danger all around us, I could not but think it probable that my time was short. But you wish to know how I supported my hope in this trying hour. I hardly dare answer this solemn inquiry, for I know how easily one may be deceived in such an alternative. But I think it was made the occasion of much searching of heart to me. I think I was prepared to say amen! to the determination of my Judge. My thoughts and my anxieties, were in a measure turned away from myself, to those who were alike exposed to danger without a hope in Christ. I don't know that I can say more."

On the occasion alluded to in the preceding letter, it might be well said that the whole ship's crew "saw the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. For at his word the stormy winds arose, which lifted up the waves thereof. They were carried up to the Heaven, they went down again to the depths: their souls melted away because of trouble. They reeled to and fro, and staggered like a drunken man, and were at their wit's end." The tempest swept over them with tremendous fury, and the breakers were at hand. Destruction seemed stalking through the deep in a thousand hideous forms.

"But they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He made the storm to cease, and the waves thereof were still. Then they were glad because they were at rest, and soon were they brought

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unto the haven where they would be." As soon as the storm had subsided, and all again was calm, Mr. R. seized upon the earliest opportunity to have a private interview with his two sons who were on board.—He begged them to consider what a deliverance had been vouchsafed to them.

"What," said he, "would have been your probable doom, had God seen fit to have permitted the vessel to have been lost, and you to have gone down to the bottom of the sea? Had he seen fit to have summoned you to his bar amid the wild howlings of the storm, and the angry surges of the deep?"

H—— replied: "My mind was upon this very subject. I was led to close self-examination, and when there seemed no possibility of escape, I felt that I could say 'Lord, here am I, I give myself up into thy hands, I hope in thy promises.' And immediately the words of the prophet came to my mind, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'"

This was indeed remarkable. But it was like a cordial to a christian father's heart. It was the last conversation that Mr. R—— ever had with this son on the subject of religion. In a few weeks H—— went out in another vessel to the West Indies. And the first intelligence the parents received in relation to him, was, that strangers had closed his dying eyes, and that he was buried in a foreign land. It seems that in a short time after his arrival, he was seized with one of the fevers incident to the climate, and lived only a few days.—The bereaved parents, however, had every reason to believe that God had fulfilled his promise in reference to this child, and that he had died, being "regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ."

They now viewed him as garnered up in glory, and safe within the chrysolite walls of the New Jerusalem. And now their thoughts turned with increased solicitude to their surviving children, and their prayers were offered with more fervency, that they also might be brought in, and "saved with the remnant of the true Israelites."

The character of one of their younger children, Anna Amelia, had been marked with peculiar seriousness from her

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infancy. She indeed seemed almost like an unearthly being At the time of her baptism, Mrs. R—— appeared to realize a peculiar and unusual confidence in the divine promises. She felt the full assurance of faith in relation to this child, that God would regenerate her, and make her his own by adoption and grace. The manner in which her mind was at that time impressed, was afterwards frequently made the subject of reflection. Like Mary, "she kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." And when she saw this dear child growing up, with her affections apparently fixed on God, she could not but hope that the Lord had sanctified her, even from her baptismal birth.

Several years had now elapsed since the death of Henry. Anna Amelia had nearly reached her thirteenth year. She had for some time manifested such a love for prayer, and for reading the holy scriptures, and evinced such an apparent abhorrence of sin—such a fear of offending God—such tenderness of conscience, and so anxious a solicitude to please her Heavenly Father, and to trust in his mercy through Christ, and her conduct was all so sweetly accordant with the spirit and requirements of the gospel, that her parents could no longer doubt, that God had taken her for his own child. Often did they converse with her about eternal things, and always were they more and more impressed with the certainty that she was truly born of God.

Can there be a more interesting being on earth, than a young, beautiful girl of thirteen, blooming in all the freshness of health—buoyant with all the sprightliness of childhood,—and yet exhibiting the sweetness and loveliness of all the christian graces spread over her character in chastened and child-like simplicity.

Such a sweet and lovely one was Anna Amelia. She was growing up the delight and almost the idol of her parents' hearts. Suddenly the blight of disease fell upon this loved one. She sank under its power, and soon exhibited symptoms that were truly alarming. All of a father's anxiety and a mother's love could not prevail for her rescue, or compel the fell destroyer to relax his grasp. Her brothers and sisters gathered around her sick bed with weeping eyes. She more than guessed its meaning!

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The death of Anna Amelia: its effect.

At length she was plainly told that hers was a mortal sickness. After the first agitation had passed away, she exhibited great and unbroken composure, and sweetly said—"I am willing to go wherever the hand of God shall conduct me." Thus died Anna Amelia, at the early age of thirteen, full of faith and hope.

This seemed a dreadful stroke to the sorrowing parents and bereaved brothers and sisters. But still they had rich sources of consolation. Though God had taken away two of this baptized family, the departed had both left behind them the brighest evidences of their adoption into the divine family.

The death of Anna Amelia made a deep impression upon the hearts of her two elder sisters. By this afflictive event they were led to reflect upon their own unpreparedness to die. The awful truth became written as with a diamond's point, upon their consciences, that they were sinners guilty and condemned before God: that they had never loved Him as they ought: that they had done nothing but sin all their lives. They began to sorrow after a godly sort. They went to the feet of the Saviour, and found 'joy and peace in believing. Mr. and Mrs. R—— were more and more strengthened in the belief that God would certainly fulfil his covenant promises made to them in behalf of their offspring. Two of their dear children were now in the church triumphant, and two had become, as they hoped, living members in the church militant.

At the time that Anna Amelia fell sick and died, G——, the eldest brother, was absent. As we have already remarked, he had become the commander of a vessel, and his life was chiefly passed amid the perils of the ocean, Though he was surrounded with great and numerous temptations, the influence of early instruction, and the pious example of his parents, operated with sufficient power to keep him from open immorality. Many of the voyages which he made were to the West Indies, where he met and formed intimacies with many individuals from the European continent, who had embraced those loose and sceptical notions which are so prevalent in France. The effect of this association was highly pernicious. Though G—— had many serious reflections, he could not make up his mind to become a christian. The opposition of

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he natural heart existed in undiminished power. He therefore without scarcely being conscious of it, drank in the poison of infidelity.

He had naturally an amiable and affectionate heart, and felt most keenly the death of little Anna Amelia. He wept over her grave with all the fond affection of a devoted and almost heart-broken brother. A strange conflict of emotions was awakened in his mind, when he heard how she was sustained in death by the christian's hope. But when he learned that his two eldest sisters had professed to have experienced a change of heart, an indignant feeling arose in his mind which he could hardly suppress. His respect for his parents, however restrained him from giving utterance to the loathing he felt for every thing that related to godliness. So great was the enmity of his heart at this time against the truth, as he subsequently acknowledged, that when he heard that his sisters were going to partake of the communion, for a moment he wished that some deadly poison were infused into the sacramental cup. Though he did not express these and similar feelings at the time, yet it was obvious to all his family, that he was utterly opposed to religion. Oh! what a dark hour was this to those bereaved parents! Their first-born—their eldest son—an infidel! The child that drew after him so much affection—that had been sacramentally washed in the baptismal water, and offered to God amid so many prayers—now ready to abjure Christ, and deny religion! What a trial was here for the faith of these christian parents! Would God indeed bring in this son? Would he make him one of his regenerate people? Being not weak in faith, they considered not the apparent obstacles in the way—"They staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but were strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was also able to perform." They said very little to G——, but sought continually to bring his mind imperceptibly under good and holy influences.—They believed that his infidelity was a disease of the heart, and that if he could be made to feel his sinfulness, and the obligation he was under to God, he would be constrained to cast his scepticism away, and flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him in the gospel.

At this time he remained at home for several months

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The serious impressions made on J——'s mind: his decided conversion.

They were months of deep anxiety to Mr. and Mrs. R——. In their solicitude for their living child, they almost forgot their sorrow for the one that had gone down to the grave. At the family altar G—— was ever particularly and affectionately remembered. Religious conversation was frequently addressed to the other children in his presence, though little was usually said directly to him. He became evidently troubled in his mind. It was manifest that he was not satisfied with his present state. All this, however, seemed only to increase the opposition of his heart to the truth.

At length, he was induced to attend an evening lecture. In this instance, the preacher, though entirely unacquainted with G——, seemed to delineate his character with great accuracy, and to apply to him the truths of God, in a manner that stript him of all his excuses, and left him a naked sinner, trembling before the bar of divine justice. It was a barbed arrow that went to the very centre of his heart. Now as the light broke in upon him, and he saw his true character, and the wickedness of his heart, "the iron entered his soul, and he tasted the wormwood and the gall." He went home, and shut himself up, and tried to pray. He passed the whole night in anguish unspeakable. He felt that he was an awful sinner. Thick darkness settled down upon his soul. He saw that he had merited eternal wrath, and that it would be an act of infinite mercy, if he was saved from going down to the pit. All that he could do, was to fall down before the divine footstool and cry, Lord have mercy on me. His voice went up and entered that "ear which is never dull of hearing." The blessed Saviour appeared for his rescue. He became a most decided, devoted, consistent christian. Having become, by spiritual regeneration, the child of God, he delighted in nothing so much as in doing good. It became his meat and drink to glorify God—to point out to his fellow seamen the star of Bethlehem—to direct them to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Who can conceive the feelings of the happy parents on this occasion? The language of the Psalmist seemed an echo to the emotions that glowed in their bosoms. "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." The only alloy to their present happiness was the recollection that all their children had not submitted to

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the same regenerating influence, which had impressed such altered and heavenly features upon the whole character of G——. He was now about to leave home on a long voyage. It had been so arranged, that N—— and J——, his two brothers, next younger than himself, were to accompany him on board the same vessel. They went to New York with this intention. Their plan, however, was afterward altered, and each of the brothers went on different voyages in separate vessels.

Mr. R., however, before being apprised of this, addressed to J—, the youngest of the three brothers, the following letter:

"My Dear Son,—

"No circumstance has ever occurred since we have had a family, so interesting as that under which we now part from our three eldest children. When we look back, and consider the danger and the hardships that G—— has undergone, and that the kind Providence of God has always watched over him, and, at last returned him home in safety, and so shed abroad *His love* in his heart, as to make him a new creature in Christ Jesus, we are astonished at the mercy that has done such great things for us, who are so undeserving.

"The same Providence is guiding and directing you now It is under His protecting care you will sail. If you confide in Him, He will preserve you. And I hope that this event will result in the conversion of both you and N—. It certainly will, *unless you wilfully reject the grace of God.* God has so ordered this event, that your brother may be a minister to you. And surely when you look back and think how he felt when he came home, and see how he is now, you can have no doubt of the reality of religion. But I feel assured that you do not doubt this—I fully believe that the Spirit of God has enlightened your mind. It is only necessary that you be *willing* to devote yourself to God. It must be an act of your will. Your mind is not darkened, nor your heart harder than that of every unconverted person. But the *will* must be bowed in submission to God. He says, 'my son give me thy heart —seek ye my face.' It is necessary that you should respond—

'Here Lord I give myself away,—
'Tis all that I can do.'

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"This must be an act of your will. You see if you neglect it, it will be from choice. Ask your brother what it was that determined him to give himself up to God—ask, if it was not *the act of his will.* His mind was as much opposed as yours. He had as strong a will to bend into submission to God, as you have. What *he has* done, through the help of God, *you can* do. And Oh! what rejoicing will it cause in our hearts—what happiness to yourself, and what joy in heaven, should you, three brothers, be all united, on board one ship, in singing praises to God from your hearts, as well as with your voices, while you are sailing on the broad ocean. And how much good may you do among the seaman—how much good to other ships' officers—and how much would God be honored by such an event, wherever the ship goes, under such circumstances.

"If you can realize the importance of these things, as they appear to me, and as *I am sure they must appear to you at some future day*, you will resolve without delay to give yourself to God. This is what God requires of every creature. And what is the import of this gift? We are his already—*His* by creation—*His* by preservation, amidst all the snares and deaths, to which we have been exposed—*His* by the redeeming blood of his dear Son—*His* by dedication in holy baptism. By each of these several claims. His right to us has *ever* been beyond any ground of controversy on our part.—But by our practice, we have denied His claim.—We have set up for ourselves—we have felt as though we could do without God. In our hearts we have said, we will not have God to reign over us. God requires that we should submit to his claim—that we should yield this controversy—and peaceably submit to his authority. This is what is meant by giving ourselves up to God. If you see that his claim is just, you must see that to oppose it, is wrong. If you are willing then to do what *you must see to be right*, you will say—'henceforth the Lord shall be my God.' If you do this, the veracity of God is pledged for your salvation. If you find it hard, remember that the hardness *consists merely in the strength of your opposition to God.* The harder it is to submit, the more is the need of submission—for the more aggravated is the sin of opposition.

"These truths I doubt not will appear plain to your mind

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But be warned of the subtlety of the great adversary. In a thousand ways, he continues to delude the soul that is convinced, and resolved on turning to God—and in thousands of instances his wiles are successful. 'Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' And he goes on the sea, as well as on the land.—May God sanctify these thoughts to the salvation of your soul, is the prayer of

"Your affectionate Father,

"S—— R——."

It has already been intimated that these brothers went on different voyages. J——, to whom the above letter was addressed, went on board of an East-Indiaman, bound to Batavia and Manilla. A year or eighteen months were expected to elapse before its return.

Mr. and Mrs. R—— never before felt so happy in the absence of their children. They believed that their eldest son had truly given his heart to God, and that the other brothers were seriously impressed. They now experienced great consolation in the thought, that they had given up their offspring in covenant to God. They could not but believe that God would remember his covenant, and make them the subjects of his saving and transforming grace.

There were several occurrences in the circle of their own home to cheer and gladden their hearts. Their two youngest daughters, the one twelve and the other ten years of age, had given striking evidence of a renewal of heart. More than a year had elapsed since this change had taken place, and though they were so young, yet their altered and consistent lives gave pleasing testimony that God had truly renewed them by his Holy Spirit. Perhaps these parents never felt that they had such abundant cause for gratitude, as at this moment. They could look upon two of their children as garnered up in glory, and five of those that were left them, had enrolled their names among the followers of the Lamb. Though three of their sons were now absent, they felt that *they* were under the guardian care of Him who ruleth the raging of the sea, and maketh its waves to praise him. They had frequent and pleasing intelligence from G—— and N——. And J——, who had gone to the

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East Indies was expected in a few weeks. At length, through the public papers, they saw announced the arrival of the ship ——, in which he sailed, at the port of New-York. They were waiting with eager and anxious solicitude to welcome him to the paternal roof. In the course of two or three days a letter arrived. It bore the post-mark of New-York. It must be from J——, announcing his arrival, and stating the time when they might expect that he would once more be with his beloved parents.—With intense interest Mr. R—— broke the seal, and rapidly glanced his eye over the lines. But no —it was not the hand—it bore not the signature of J——! Mr. R—— read on—the letter dropt from his hands—the tears rolled down his cheeks, and he exclaimed—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!" Oh! what a moment of anxiety was this to the family who were yet unacquainted with the real intelligence the letter contained.

"What is it—what is it?" was the eager inquiry.

"This letter," said Mr. R——, "is from Mr.——, the owner of the vessel in which J—— sailed. The vessel has returned, but J—— is not on board."

"Why?—where is he?" was asked by many voices.

"In the bottom of the sea!" said the father, his heart swelling with emotions too big for utterance.

The scene that followed can be better conceived than described. Yet God was in the midst of them, and his comforts refreshed their souls.

The following facts were communicated in the letter which announced J——'s death. The crew had a prosperous voyage to India, arrived in a good state at Batavia, where they discharged their cargo, and were on their way to Manilla, in the China Sea, when there suddenly blew up a heavy gale, and the vessel for a while was in some danger. J—— was on deck giving the men some orders in relation to putting the ship in proper trim to weather the gale, when a tremendous sea suddenly broke over the deck, and swept him off in a moment. Every effort was made to save him, but in vain. He never rose to the surface. No trace of his form could be found; and the ship was obliged to go on her way, and leave young R—— to slumber in the depths of the ocean, till the resurrection morn.

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When the first gush of grief had passed away, the solemn and startling inquiry came up in the minds of these parents—"In what state has J—— gone to his last account? He was swept into eternity without a moment's warning! Was he prepared to go? Had his heart been renewed?" These were fearful questions. The clouds of darkness and uncertainty seemed to gather thick around his fate. One single ray of hope to lead them to believe that he had gone to the bosom of the Saviour, would reconcile them to this dispensation. Mr. R—— seemed at once to gather that ray of hope from God's convenanted promises. "This child," said he, "has long since been given up in convenant to God; and I have faith to believe that God did change his heart—did make him truly *regenerate* before he took him out of the world."

Resting upon this hope, and fully believing that the Most High does all things well, he stayed his soul upon God, and was at peace. The stroke, however, to the wounded mother, was more than she could well bear. Her health declined, and she seemed fast hastening to the grave.—That which pressed upon her heart from day to day like a load of ice, was not the recollection that her son was in the bottom of the deep, with sea-weed wrapt around his head—it was not that he had been swept into eternity so suddenly,—but that he had gone without having left any evidence behind, that his peace was made with God.

In a few weeks the family had the mournful satisfaction of receiving the trunk, and various effects of J——. Every scrap of paper written in his own hand was carefully examined and sacredly preserved. At length they came across an unfinished letter, carelessly thrown into his trunk, which appeared to have been addressed to his parents, and was evidently written only a short time before his death.

Although I have not been able to obtain the letter above alluded to, the following communication from one of his parents will give the reader an idea of its contents. The writer remarks in reference to J——:

"He had been trained up in the Sabbath School, and was very intelligent on religious subjects. He fully *realized* that he was a sinner against God, and that the blood of Christ alone could restore him to the divine favor. His views on this subject were not of a *general* character; he believed that he

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could not be saved without a *personal* interest in the atonement.

"When he arrived from a previous voyage, his mind was deeply affected by the change he witnessed in his elder brother, who had become an heir of life during his absence. He remained at home a few weeks, which afforded frequent opportunities for conversation on the all important subject, and these opportunities, I trust, were not lost. It was then satisfactorily ascertained that he was in the habit of praying daily; and that he was determined to make religion the great concern of his life.

"When he left the paternal home for the last time, it was expected that he would sail with his two brothers. The pious parent may imagine but I shall not attempt to describe, the emotions with which we looked forward to this event. We could not be unconscious that the lives of three beloved sons would be involved in the fate of one frail bark, exposed to all the dangers of the tempestuous ocean. But we had, on the other hand, a covenant keeping God to look to. To that God we were enabled to commit the keeping of the *souls and the bodies* of our beloved children. But an unexpected interposition of Divine Providence, gave a different direction to this enterprise; and our deceased son sailed without his brothers. At first it seemed as though God might design the conversion of the two younger brothers, by the instrumentality of the elder. But it now appeared that he was to have no mortal hand to help him, that he might seek help directly from an almighty arm. Let us adore the mercy of God, who, foreseeing the end from the beginning, thus provided most effectually to bring our dear son to look directly to Himself for salvation.

"It is difficult, if not impossible, to convey to the mind of another, the force of that evidence, that has satisfied our minds that our beloved son was truly in Christ Jesus before his death. The letter which we regret it is not in our power to send you, was of a deeply interesting character, which however, none but his parents could duly appreciate, as it related to several things known only to them. The whole letter led us to believe—yea, left no doubts on our minds, that he had become supremely interested in the concerns of his soul, and that his heart was renewed by divine grace."

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This discovery brought to the sorrowing mother greater joy than if there had been conferred upon her and her family a title to all the Indies. It was as though her child had been raised from the dead. The sunshine of hope again rested upon her brightening countenance. The change in the appearance of the whole family was strikingly observable. It was as though a dark cloud had suddenly been rolled away, and the sun had poured in all his effulgence upon the scene.

The language of every individual of the family was, surely "in the midst of judgment God remembereth mercy." Mr. R—— now felt that he had received new and fresh proof that where parents give up their children in covenant to God in accordance with the divine will, those children will not be lost. In relation to his own children, he thought he had every reason to hope that the three whom God had taken from him were in felicity. And of the seven that were left him, all but two, in the judgment of charity had been renewed in the spirit of their minds. The various afflictions which this family were called to suffer, tended to deepen their piety, and lead them to strive to live, as it were, every moment beneath the eye of the Saviour. This holy living, together with the pious counsel he received, exerted a most salutary influence upon the mind of their youngest son, a lad only nine years old. Seldom have I seen more decided and unequivocal marks of genuine conversion, sustained by a corresponding and continued change of deportment, than were manifest in this instance.

There was only one of his family now that had not been brought in, and in relation to that one, Mr. R—— remarked, in a communication recently received—

"I believe that my confidence in the covenant promises of God, has never been greater with respect to any one of our children than it now is respecting the one who has not yet, I fear, fully embraced the Saviour."

Here I wish the reader to pause and ponder these facts: for they are well authenticated facts. If parents did give up their children, when they brought them to baptism, *in faith* if they held on to the promises of God in relation to their children in after life with firm faith—if they reared up their offspring, not as though they were theirs, but God's children—if they continued to believe and pray, and let the light of

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their example shine around the path of their offspring, would not those offspring realize all that is promised in the covenant? Would they not become *regenerate* and spiritual children of the Lord? Can a solitary instance be shown, where *this—all this* has been done on the part of the parents, and the promise of God has failed? Does not the baptismal service of the Episcopal Church then, speak a solemn note of warning to parents—laying the sin of their children's living and dying *unregenerate*, at their door? Parents, think of these things!

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CHAPTER IX.

DENOMINATIONAL PECULIARITIES, NOT A MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE.

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

From the 6th of the Prophet Jeremiah.

We have often found, in surveying some vast and magnificent work of art, that the full effect it was calculated to produce, was not known until it had been surveyed from several different positions.

Though in this our walk we have already nearly gone "round about Zion," and seen its "principal towers and bulwarks," still, we have no doubt, that their beauty and strength will be better understood if they are viewed from other points.

In the present chapter, we propose to invite the reader to look at Zion with its whole assemblage of palaces and towers from three distinct points. Or in other words, we shall spread before him views of three different individuals, as they were impressed in looking at Zion from three different points.

Preliminary to this however, I wish to offer a few considerations, showing that in our view, denominational peculiarities are not to be regarded as altogether a matter of indifference.

The remark, "*that it is of no consequence to what church we attach ourselves if we are only christians,*" is so current that it has become quite common-place, and, by many, is regarded as an axiom involving incontrovertible truth. But if we will take the trouble to analyze this remark, we think it will be found to contain more error than truth. Doubtless the most essential thing to be looked to, in connecting ourselves

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with any church, is, the evidence of our being truly born of God—the clear indications of the germ, and commencement of that spiritual and divine life which will be perpetuated through eternity. Without this, church-membership is vain. Without this, no matter with what denomination we may be connected, or how admirable may be its arrangements for leading believers on from strength to strength till they come to Mount Zion with songs and everlasting joy. If we have not vital godliness—practical and heartfelt piety—*we* shall never reach Mount Zion—we shall be driven away forever from the presence of God and the Lamb.

But if we have a principle of piety awakened into life within us, it is of some importance how that new spiritual existence is matured and brought forward.

The church is the nurse by whom, and the nursery in which the children of God are to be trained for Heaven. Parents usually deem it of some consequence, to commit the education of their children to proper hands. These children are educated only for time—the children of God are to be educated for eternity. Is it of no consequence then, to whom their education is committed?—or how they are brought up? What if through carelessness, or negligence, or mismanagement on the part of the nurse to whom they are committed, or from her withholding from them the proper nutriment—instead of growing "unto perfect men, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"—they languish in feebleness, are stinted in their growth, pass their days in almost infantile dwarfishness, and finally fall into early decrepitude, will they not personally suffer loss? Will not God be dishonored, and his name reproached on their account? St. Paul tells us of some, who, though they built on the right foundation, and though they would finally be saved—yet, inasmuch as they built of "hay, wood and stubble," would suffer loss, and "be saved, yet so as by fire."

Again: God purposes to accomplish great things in our world through his people. But his people disqualify themselves to be co-workers with Him, when they are so carelessly nurtured, that their growth is stinted, and they scarcely exceed the pigmy size of mere dwarfs. Or in other words when they live on, ignorant and uninstructed in those doctrinal truths which expand the mind, strengthen the moral

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affections, and tend to give more vigor to the principle of holiness—bringing the intellect, the affections, yea, the whole man with all his powers, under the salutary influence of that heavenly discipline which will train and qualify him to take a prominent place in "the sacramental host of God's elect." Thus do they, who are not under these right influences, not only fail of doing the will of the Lord by helping to prepare the way of the chariot of the Redeemer, but by their limited knowledge, by their neglect of divine grace, by their lack of spiritual growth, and by their low standard of piety, they bring dishonor upon the holy name by which they are called. They lead the enemies of God to blaspheme, and to say in scornful derision, "These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land."* Now we do know, that almost every thing relating to future character and usefulness, depends upon the manner in which children are nurtured, and trained, and educated. And it is no less true, that the character and usefulness of christians depend upon the influences that are brought to bear upon them in *the church*. This of itself, were there no other considerations, shows that it is of very great importance with what church we unite ourselves. The doctrines must be sound and scriptural—the discipline and worship, such as tend to edification and the promotion of true godliness and enlightened piety—and all its arrangements so manifestly in harmony with the word of God, as to be an epistle of commendation, bearing the broad sign and signature of Christ himself. And farther, we ought not to place ourselves in any church, unless there can be affirmed of it, that it is "a congregation of faithful men in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." That the Episcopal Church is such a church, appears to be the deep and solemn conviction of the writers of the three following communications. They were all of them requested by the author, to give a brief statement of the manner in which they were led to connect themselves with the Episcopal Church, and some of the reasons which prompted them to take this step. The author was led to make this request of them, from the fact, that they had all of them for many years been most exemplary

* Ezek. xxxvi. 13.

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and devoted christians in the bosom of other churches, and that they were men of great candor, of cool and deliberate judgment, and of undoubted piety, having retained to the present time the undiminished confidence of those christian bodies from which they felt it their duty to separate themselves. I would also add, that these individuals reside in different parts of the country, and have no personal knowledge of each other. The first letter is from a layman. This letter perhaps will be read with increased interest, when it is known that the writer has some time since passed the meridian of life, and is now descending into the vale of years, surrounded by a lovely family, who have all been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and who, by their correct christian deportment, and devotedness to the Saviour, present a lovely example, not only of a holy, happy family, where God reigns, and religion is the most interesting theme, but also of the truth of that unerring declaration of scripture—"Train up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This worthy and beloved father, as he remarks, had strong and almost invincible prejudices against the Episcopal Church. His testimony is the more valuable on this account. Whatever may be thought of his argument, we can bear witness to his close and careful walk with God—his high and holy aim to advance the glory of his Creator—and to the kindliness of his feelings to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Often have I thought that if any of my acquaintance ever reached Heaven, and stood on the glorious mount of God, the writer of the following letter would be among the number. Though a plain man, and never having enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education, he has a sound judgment, and a heart warm with the love of God:

"Dear Sir:

"In compliance with your request, I will attempt to give you some account of the manner in which I was led to become connected with the Episcopal Church. It was with decided aversion to the forms of the Prayer Book, that I first began to attend the Episcopal Church. I had in early life received an impression, that religion was at a low standard among *Churchmen;* and that impression had lost none of its strength

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with increase of years. Peculiar circumstances, however, induced me, occasionally, to attend worship at an Episcopal Church. About this time a beloved son was made a subject of divine grace, by the preaching and counsel of an Episcopal minister. My attention was now more seriously directed to a consideration of the mode of conducting worship in the Episcopal Church, and to an examination of the Prayer Book. The result was, that I became convinced that the gospel was faithfully and forcibly exhibited in the *service*. With the *preaching* I was entirely satisfied; and, notwithstanding my aversion to forms, I was induced to procure seats for my family, (regarding the measure as altogether temporary,) in an Episcopal sanctuary, where my son had received so great a blessing. For a considerable period the peculiarities of the church worship were a burden; but, by degrees, as they were better understood, what I had regarded as *forms*, I realized to be *devotional exercises*. After my strong prepossessions were in some degree removed, I began to examine into the design of the various matters peculiar to the church; and the result of my inquiries was a decided conviction that if christians of other denominations were unincumbered with *some* things which appear to be a draw-back to the Episcopal Church, they are also lacking in *much* that is instructive, and that adds greatly to the solemnity of worship.

"When I first witnessed the administration of *baptism* in the church, I was forcibly reminded of a remark made to me by an aged and respected brother in the *Congregational* Church, which was as follows: "There is a great want of solemnity in our mode of baptism, and the ordinance loses much of its importance on that account." I had been reminded of this remark, when witnessing the administration of this ordinance by *immersion*.—There was a hurry, and bustle, and confusion, distracting to the mind. But when witnessing the administration of this ordinance in the Episcopal Church, I felt the truth of my friend's remark still more forcibly. There was a solemn stillness; no noise of thoughtless spectators; every thing was befitting an ordinance designed as a seal of the everlasting covenant. The reflection came upon my mind with great power, that *here* was all the solemnity, the absence of which was so much lamented by my Congre-

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gational friend. But I pass to notice the other appointed seal of the covenant.

"The *communion service* was not without its influence upon my mind. I had sometimes noticed an appearance of despatch in this solemn ordinance, as practised in some *independent* churches. But *here* was a solemnity becoming the most solemn event which it was designed to commemorate. First, the Lord's Prayer; then, an invocation of the Holy Spirit; then a rehearsal of the ten commandments; while the communicants, *on their knees*, invoke the merciful forgiveness of their past sins, and grace to keep the law, for time to come. Here the broken law is spread out before us; at the rehearsal of each commandment, the response is a confession of guilt, and an invocation of pardoning mercy. What can be more suitable than this, to prepare the heart for a right reception of the symbols of the broken body and shed blood of the Saviour of the world? The attitude in which this sacred duty is performed, to my mind, is not an immaterial circumstance. It seems to me that in this most solemn transaction, the communicants should come around the altar, and *on their knees* receive the sacred symbols, from the hand of Christ's ambassador.

"I have found, also, that the appointed services, which mark the great events of the *religious year*, are eminently adapted to fix the attention upon the prominent incidents involved in the history of the Lord Jesus Christ; and to induce devout and humble exercises of the heart. Those for the season of *Advent* have a delightful influence in turning the thoughts to the scenes and circumstances connected with the coming of Christ in the flesh. The language used by the apostles is well adapted to express our feelings on this subject: "Rejoice ye Gentiles with His people, and again, praise the Lord all ye Gentiles, and laud Him all ye people."—Those for the *Epiphany* direct our minds to a consideration of the obligation of christians to publish "the gospel to every creature." Those of *Lent* are happily adapted to lead the mind to devout meditations upon the sufferings and death of the Saviour; upon our lost state as transgressors of God's righteous law; and upon the infinite compassion of Christ, who at so great a sacrifice, has made it possible for *repenting* sinners to obtain pardon and eternal life. Those of *Easter*

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tell of his triumph over death and hell, and of the firm foundation of the christian's hope. And in the yet more glorious event of the *Ascension*, we are led along by the appropriate exercises, till we find ourselves standing with the disciples of our blessed Lord, steadfastly looking up toward heaven, as he ascends, and hear a voice proclaiming—'This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.' *Whitsunday* calls up to mind the glorious *descent* of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost—but I forbear to proceed.

"It has been often remarked that every thing is beautiful in its season; and that *order* is conspicuous in the works of God. It is likewise an apostolic injunction—"Let every thing be done decently and in order." It is a chief excellence in these appointed services of the church, that they are in harmony with the sentiments just quoted. And the scriptural truths embraced in these exercises, come upon the mind with tenfold power from these happy associations.

"Few persons have thought more unfavorably of forms of prayer than myself; and it was not till several months had elapsed, that my mind was released from the strong prejudices I had formed on that point. Without entering into a discussion of the subject here, I shall briefly speak of it as regards my own experience. My aversión to this part of worship gradually subsided as I became familiar with the exercises, so that I could participate in them understandingly. And when I had attained a tolerable knowledge of the several parts, I found it to be in a high degree devotional. In truth it has become to me the most interesting part of worship. I do sometimes, nevertheless, experience a weariness before the service is finished; but a little self-examination on those occasions, always leads me to see that the cause of that weariness is a want of watchfulness, whereby I suffer my mind to wander from the duties before me. And now, after two years experience in this matter, I am not only satisfied with the morning and evening service of the church, as it is appointed to be read before the sermons, but I think it far better adapted to promote the great end of all religious services, than any extemporary exercises whatever. I am aware that it is objected against the use of *forms*, that they lead to formality in worship, to which the mind is sufficiently prone

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without such a help. My answer to this objection is, that I have not found it so. I do not realize that this decided preference for the services of the liturgy has, in any degree, diminished my interest in extempore prayer on more private occasions for social worship.

"On the subject of *Episcopacy*, my mind is quite satisfied. If *infant baptism* and the *christian Sabbath* can be proved to be of apostolic usage, so can *Episcopacy*, by the same species of evidence. As I believe the former, I cannot reasonably reject the latter. But if it cannot be proved by any express declaration of scripture, so neither can any such warrant be found in the scriptures for *Presbyterianism* or *Congregationalism*. How then does the subject stand in point of expediency? I think it admits not of a doubt, that the advantage is altogether on the side of Episcopacy. Every candid man who has noticed what is passing around him, will admit that in all denominations, there are *in fact* grades in the ministry, though they are not recognized in their church polity. In each *synod*, *church-conference*, and *consociation*, there is a *governing spirit*; and that spirit is in the breast of one man. Or if there are exceptions, it is where there is a striving for *mastery* among the two or three, who are aspirants for supremacy. I do not say this unkindly, nor with a view to depreciate the exalted piety and acknowledged excellency of our brethren of those denominations who have laid aside Episcopacy. But I simply notice a fact which has existed, and probably always will exist, while human nature continues as it is. Far better is it, therefore, in my view, that there be one elected to the office of Bishop, by the consent of his clerical brethren.

"Having now briefly recited some of the considerations which have led my mind to a renunciation of past errors, in relation to the Episcopal Church, and to become in feeling and in sentiment an Episcopalian, I have only to add, that I regard it among the most interesting events of my life, that my family have been brought under this influence; and each of the several members of it is no less happy in this consideration than myself. Since we have become associated with Episcopalians, *five* of our number, it is hoped, have passed from death unto life.

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Importance of leading the young in the right way.

"It is possible that the forgoing recital may lead some persons to the conclusion, that the Episcopal worship is attended with difficulty; and that considerable time is required to obtain that knowledge, which is necessary to a participation in it.—My own reflections on this subject have resulted in the following conclusions:

"1. It is hardly possible for any one, who has not been placed in similar circumstances, to form a just estimate of the difficulty of bringing the mind to an impartial examination of a subject, about which, it has been twenty years nurturing false notions. The mind instinctively turns away from such an investigation; and cannot without painful effort be brought *impartially* to the test of truth. It is only by *little* and *little* that the work can be accomplished.

"2. If the foregoing inference be just, we see how vastly important it is, before making a decision in so solemn a matter, as a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that we carefully and *candidly* examine into the peculiarities of the different religious communities, and look well to the '*law and the testimony.*'

"3. It also shows most evidently the high responsibility of parents and guardians, and the importance of leading children along, from their earliest years, in the way in which they should go, so that when they grow old, there may be no need of their having to enter upon new paths. I cannot here refrain from adding, that I was surprised to notice how much more easily my children of eight, ten, and twelve years became familiar with the Episcopal worship than myself. And from the first, it made an impression upon them, that I trust will never be effaced. What I have noticed of its influence upon *their* minds, has often recalled to memory what I have felt, and what many others have expressed of the influence upon the mind through life, from being taught in childhood, to repeat *daily* the Lord's Prayer. Now if this prayer, which is very comprehensive in its terms, (quite too much so to convey very definite ideas to the mind of a child,) exerts such an influence upon the character, is it not most obvious, that the liturgy of the Episcopal Church, being impressed upon the mind in early life, must impart an influence that, in most instances, would be visible in the character through life? If not, why are christians of every denomination, in

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the *sabbath school*, and in the *family*, with untiring effort, inculcating upon the youthful mind, those principles, which accord with their views of religious truth?

"In making the foregoing brief sketch, I trust that I have not been influenced by a desire to depreciate the principles and feelings of my christian brethern of any denomination. I have endeavored to show that my mind has been changed, on this important subject, not from caprice, but by a deliberate and rational inquiry after truth. And I hope I have complied with the spirit of the apostolic injunction—'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.'

"Yours, &c."

The writer of the next communication is a clergyman, who as his own narrative states, was reared in the bosom of another church, whose ministry he also subsequently entered. That he acted conscientiously in leaving the church of his fathers, and casting in his lot among us, no one, who is personally acquainted with him will doubt. The letter itself will show that his mind is capable of taking a wide and comprehensive range over the fields of human investigation. He has given the highest evidence of his love for Christ and immortal souls, by breaking loose from all attachments that bound him to the Atlantic shores, going to the far West, and submitting to every kind of toil, sacrifice, and self-denial, to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ to those who were perishing for lack of knowledge:

"My Dear Sir:

Most gladly do I embrace an opportunity to address you agreeable to your request, on the subject of the government and usages of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to which I belong, whose piety I revere, and whose forms of holy devotion I admire and love. Once I was connected with a denomination of christians, whose rules of discipline were, in many respects, different from those of the Episcopal Church. I have no disposition to declaim against them. With them there is much ardent zeal and devoted piety. With them my serious attention was first engaged on the momentous subject of religion. With them I experienced the first joys and

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consolations of the blessed hope of everlasting life, which I now cherish. Should these lines ever meet the view of any who differ from me, I beg them to divest themselves of prejudice, and to contemplate, in the spirit of christian candor, the reasons which effected a change in my sentiments relative to the government of the church. Although this subject is of minor importance when compared with the great doctrine of salvation, still nothing should be deemed beneath our notice, which affects the beauty and health of the church, which is the body of Christ, and the reward of his toils and death.

"It is but a brief statement that I can make of the reasons which compelled me to connect myself with the Protestant Episcopal Church, to which I now belong, and in whose sacred ministry I am now laboring; and should they contribute any thing towards influencing the advocates of parties to think more, and to contend less, I shall feel myself amply compensated for the labour I am now performing.

"I was educated as a congregationalist—I studied theology three years at Andover as a Congregationalist—I commenced the work of the ministry as a Congregationalist. I felt an entire confidence that the system of church government, to which I was accustomed, was right. Consequently it never once entered my mind, during my whole course of ten years study, that I ought to investigate the subject. Here I cannot but express the belief and the regret, that such is the fact in regard to hundreds of young men in similar circumstances. Soon after I had entered on the work of the ministry, I was called to officiate in a parish, that was much disturbed by party dissensions. Much effort was made and many means employed for the restoration of peace and harmony, but without effect. The most, that the counsellors employed could do, was to recommend conciliatory measures. The contending parties felt themselves at full liberty to reject the proposed measures, and, in the last resort, to be their own judges of their grievances. As I extended my acquaintance with the religious community, I found, to my surprise and regret, that similiar evils existed to a great extent in many parishes of the same denomination. The system of government which they had adopted, appeared to me, on viewing its practical results, to be extremely inefficient, and unprovided with proper defence against the introduction of error and party strife

and divisions. Under these circumstances, as the question for the first time suggested itself to my mind, 'did Christ leave his church thus destitute of an efficient system of government?' it appeared to me just to infer, from the benevolence of his nature, and the solicitude of his feelings for the peace and prosperity of the church he had loved and redeemed with his own blood, that he must have provided for its effectual and salutary government. I now began to enquire for the first time in my life, 'what are the facts relative to this subject?' It was obviously a question, that should be decided, not by the opinions of any class of men, but simply by an appeal to *facts*. I now directed my attention to the *bible*—to *history*,—and to *the writings of the fathers of the primitive church*.

"It appeared to me, that whatever correct instruction on this subject can be derived from the bible, is decidedly in favor of that system of government, which has been adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country. As the christian church is a modification of the ancient Jewish church the three orders of the ministry of the Jewish church appeared to afford some intimation of the divine mind in regard to the ministry of the christian church. While Christ was on earth, such seemed to me obviously to have been the arrangement in regard to the ministry. After his ascension to Heaven, it appeared obvious, that his apostles were advanced to the first rank in the ministry, the seventy disciples to the second, and the deacons to the third. It moreover appeared to me obvious from scripture, that others were in the first age advanced to the apostolic office, and that they possessed, in some respects, a superiority over other ministers. Such appeared to have been the fact in regard to Timothy at Ephesus, and Titus in Crete.

"From history it appeared to me as obvious as any fact can appear from authentic history, that the government of the church was Episcopal from the beginning. This was particularly evident from the epistles and writings of Ignatius. Clement, and Polycarp, who lived in the age of the apostles, and were conversant with them. I observed, to my great surprise, that Ignatius, within the short compass of eighteen or twenty octavo pages, mentions the three distinct orders of the ministry, as we now receive them, no less than twenty-seven times.—This same fact appeared to be rendered still

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more evident from the writings of Irenæus, Tertullian, and others, who lived in the second century. It appeared to be corroborated by the testimony of Cyprian, Firmitian, Cornelius, and many others in the third century. It seemed to be most unequivocally confirmed by the testimony of Eusebius, Jerome, Sozomen, and a host of other unimpeachable witnesses, who lived in the fourth and succeeding centuries. To my great astonishment I could not find that an individual among the fathers of the primitive church had written any thing calculated to influence an impartial mind to the adoption of a different conclusion. It appeared to me that the effort of some recent writers to set aside the testimony of the ancient fathers, or to force it into the support and defence of modern sects, was altogether unworthy of honest men. I found to my great suprise, that Calvin, Grotius, and several others, who are among the most learned of the Presbyterian writers, have conceded the fact, that Episcopacy was the form of church government universally adopted from the age of the apostles down to the time of the reformation in the fifteenth century.

"The great question which now remained for me to decide, was, whether the circumstances of society in modern times, which are in many respects different from those of society in primitive times, may not justify a departure from primitive usages in the government of the church? or, in other words, whether some other form of church government may not now be more expedient than that of Episcopacy? In regard to this question, I reflected, that human nature is the same in every age, and that consequently, if the church of Christ, as established by himself and his apostles, was adapted to the circumstances and wants of men eighteen hundred years ago, it must be adapted in like manner to the circumstances and wants of men now, and in every age. I found that schism was most severely rebuked by the divinely inspired apostles, as a grevious sin, and as leading to disastrous results. I could not, therefore, as an honest man and consistent christian, do otherwise than to connect myself with a church, that from my childhood I had been accustomed to regard with feelings of much indifference.

"In all this course of investigation, I had no one to advise with. I had never in my life attended the worship of the

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Episcopal Church, till I was perfectly satisfied that it had ample support for its system of government and mode of worship, both from scripture, and the usage of the primitive church. I could not think that any valid objection could be urged against prescript forms of worship, when I reflected that the psalms of David and Asaph were divinely inspired forms for the worship of God in the temple of Jerusalem; that Christ himself had given his sanction to them by attending regularly public worship in the synagogues, where forms of devotion were universally used; that he gave his disciples a form of prayer; that he when in his greatest agony in the garden, prayed three times, using the same words, or form; and moreover, that they soon came into universal use in the christian world, and are to this day used by the largest part of professed christians. They have the sanction of the wisest and best, and holiest of the men of modern, as well as of ancient times. The forms of our church are pre-eminently adapted to aid the devotions of the humble worshipper, to arrest the attention of the thoughtless and careless, and to interest children and youth. I envy not the feelings of the man who can pour contempt on a practice, that has the sanction of the Spirit and of the Son of God, and of the Church in every age. I envy not the feelings of the man to whom the divinely inspired forms of scripture are uninteresting, and who can take no pleasure in approaching the throne of God in the use of the same words, which often dwelt on the lips of Chrysostom, and Cranmer, and Ridley, and Hooker, and Martyn. Having been accustomed to both extempore and prescript forms of public worship, I would record it as my deliberate opinion, were this the last time that I ever expected to write, that the latter mode of worship has a decided advantage in many respects over the former. No where have I ever seen more of the spirit of pure and heavenly devotion than in those places of worship, where the liturgy of the Prostestant Episcopal Church is uniformly used. I am now laboring in the great valley of the Mississippi. Here the obvious effects of the liturgy of our Church, are to restrain extravagance and fanaticism, and to foster the spirit of peace and order, and of pure and undefiled religion. The liturgy of our Church is a wall of defence against the errors, and the parties, that are at this time withering, or crumbling to atoms, many other

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bodies of christians in our country. The Episcopal Church has ever stood firm and unmoved amidst the convulsions. that have long disturbed the christian community. Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces. Long may those who take pleasure in her stones and favor her dust, have occasion to rejoice, that they have come indeed to 'Mount Zion; and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels: to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.'

Yours, &c."

The communication that follows also comes from a clergyman. The spirit in which it is written, and the sound and judicious views with which it is characterized, will at once show the reader, that the writer is one of those men whom it would be a privilege to know, and seek counsel from, in our journey to Mount Zion.

'Dear Sir:

"I cordially approve of your design to prepare a little work of a practical character, on the peculiarities of the Episcopal Church. Such a work is due to the cause of christianity, if it be true that our church possesses any peculiar advantage in its mode of presenting the christian religion before the world: and it seems not less due to ourselves, for the purpose of meeting the inquiries of those who are interested but uninformed on the subject. I comply with pleasure, therefore, with your request to me, to state the occasion of my transferring my connection to the Episcopal Church from another denomination.

"To the labors of a faithful clegyman of the denomination in which I was educated, I am indebted under God, for my earliest instructions and my first serious impressions on the subject of religion. But it was from a clergyman of the Episcopal Church that I received, during the absence of my own minister, the counsels and prayers which I needed during the season of my first anxious solicitude respecting my eter-

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nal interests. The faithful labors of this servant of God, I cannot but remember with devout gratitude to Him who employed him as an instrument in leading me to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

"It may perhaps be useful to unfold a little more at large the incident above alluded to. My mind was, at that time, awakened to an entirely new discovery of my relation to God as a transgressor of his law. Educated from infancy without the influence of parental piety, and in a school of mere worldly morality, I had been taught to regard sin as a transgression against personal and social welfare rather than an offence against God. Jesus Christ I regarded as a benevolent Being and a high example of moral excellence, but neither felt any obligation to him as a Saviour, nor had the least perception of the necessity of his death for sinners. But at that moment, I was contemplating sin as an awakened sinner in its relation to the divine law and government. In this view, a difficulty presented itself, which, until then, I was unconscious of. Deeply as I then abhorred sin, and penitent as I felt for a life of thoughtless neglect of God and my soul, and anxious as I was to be pardoned and reconciled to God, I perceived not how pardon could be extended to a sinner consistently with the truth and righteousness of the divine character. It appeared to me that God would be *unjust* in pardoning a sinner. Every mode of reconciliation which I could conceive, seemed utterly baseless. No possible way of salvation, that I could imagine, harmonized the divine attributes and made *mercy consistent with justice*. The prayer which was at that moment offered for me, and which was what I may term an extemporaneous appropriation of the liturgy, presented an atoning and all-sufficient sacrifice. It brought me in the arms of faith to the throne of *grace*—to God as reconciling the world to himself in Jesus Christ:—My difficulties at once vanished—I could at once approach God in faith and hope, and rejoice in the God of my salvation. This circumstance, together with some acquaintance with the comparative success which had attended his labors and that of my own pastor in their respective congregations, placed my mind in an attitude of impartiality towards the two denominations.

"After having resolved on making a public profession of

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religion, a question arose in my mind as to which of the two churches I should unite with. My educational prejudices, and social connections all lay on the side of that with which I had been connected. The bias of my mind was affected, at that time, by the different mode of presenting the truth, and the different spirit which attended it in these two denominations. Both were undoubtedly orthodox in doctrine and evangelical in spirit. Yet there was on the one hand, an eager and proselyting spirit mingled with its greater ardour, that tended to let down my mind from the great consideration of salvation; while on the other, there was apparent a liberal and noble catholicism, which rose above minor and sectarian interests, and left my mind free to pursue its eager inquiries after spiritual knowledge. This inclined me thoroughly towards the Episcopal Church, to which I should then have attached myself, but for the strongly existing personal influence of the friends among whom I was educated, and the entire absence of all counteracting efforts. Under these circumstances, and being without information on the peculiarities of each church, and moreover, viewing this part of religion among the several denominations, as involving no practical consequences, I united where I had been educated, and remained in communion with that denomination for several years. My associations were, on the whole, agreeable and profitable. I witnessed much zeal and prosperity among them, (although more than I could approve, interrupted by seasons of sad coldness and decline) and I shall always remember our brethren of that denomination with affection and sympathy.

"But it is due to my subject to present a less favourable view. The objections against that denomination, which I am about to enumerate, arose from practical experience, and without any relation to any intended transfer of my connections, which then I did not anticipate.

"The first relates to extemporaneous prayer in public worship. On this subject, however, I did not experience that practical difficulty which constitutes a popular objection among those who are educated churchmen. I refer to a supposed *inability to follow and unite* with the clergyman in his prayer. There was no room, indeed, for this objection in regard to the prayers of the senior pastor, for it was so perfectly a form as to be familiar to every child in the con

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gregation. Nor did I find this a difficulty in the truly extemporaneous prayers of the junior pastor. For these, prompted by pious and ardent feeling, his course of thought was natural, and included those grand topics which must occur to every mind that is in earnest and eager after intercourse with God. But the objection related to the painful variations in the spirit of his prayers, which left the worshipper disappointed; and in addition to this, there were at times speculative and controversial topics introduced, which were inappropriate and repugnant to the sentiments of many of the congregation. But a more serious and oftener repeated error was, that of converting the prayer into an exhortation. These difficulties were much increased by exchanges with clergymen whose prayers were new and their sentiments various.

"In these views, whether or not I was alone, or what was the practical effect of these prayers upon the congregation, I knew not for some time. My invariable posture in prayer was such as I supposed to be common to all who really endeavored to unite in prayer with the minister,—with my head inclined and eyes closed. But after a considerable period, I was obliged one Sunday, by the occurrence of a case of indisposition in my pew, to raise my head during the long prayer, so called. And never shall I forget the amazement with which I beheld the posture and looks of the congregation. They were standing and gazing in every direction, some at the minister, and some at each other, with scarcely a head bowed in apparent devotion. This absence of every thing like union in public prayer made me involuntarily exclaim within, 'Is this a worshipping assembly?' "I had often been disturbed by the noise and rustling of a standing congregation when fatigued by a long prayer, but now I saw, not only the occasion of that, but more than I had ever suspected.

"The remaining practical difficulties to which I have alluded, I shall throw into a small compass. In extemporaneous prayers I observed the general defect of too little comprehensiveness, and too great minuteness to be properly adapted to public worship. Important subjects, such as our Country and our Rulers, were seldom mentioned. In the reading of the scriptures, also, there was a serious defect. Oftentimes they were omitted altogether, and generally they were limited to

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so small a portion that their introduction into the services seemed to be formal and constrained.

"On the general style of preaching, I hesitate not to say, that it was characterized by a spirit of piety and a directness of application that becomes this part of the public services. And yet it was alloyed by a very prevalent tone of controversy, which detracted much from the pleasure and profit of public worship. The difference in this respect between that denomination and ours, is tersely expressed in a remark made to me by a gentleman, who had been familiar with the usual style of preaching in other denominations, after he had become acquainted with that which prevails in the Episcopal Church. 'Sir,' said he, 'I hear nothing said in your church against other denominations. Your clergy seem to have but one common enemy to preach against, and that is SIN.'

"But there was a more serious defect which often filled me with alarm for the cause of truth. There seemed to be, in an extemporaneous service, no barrier to prevent churches from degenerating into heresy. I observed that the church in which a venerated ancestor of mine had labored with abundant success and fidelity, had successively fallen into the hands of an Arian, an Universalist, and a Unitarian. This, I found, was not a solitary instance, but of very common occurrence. The great body of churches in Massachusetts are an example of it.—Indeed, under such a system of worship, a gradual change of sentiments in the clergy, to which a speculative and controversial spirit naturally tends, finds nothing to check it; and after making some progress, must terminate in one of two results—the total degeneracy of the church into error, or a division of the parish.—The latter is attended with serious unhappy consequences; and especially when we consider the inefficiency of discipline which characterizes the non-Episcopal churches. When differences arise, they are with great difficulty adjusted. The instances of this were so common as to compel notice. Religion has bled at every pore during the protracted *ex-parte* councils, and lawsuits, to which resort was had; and which, after all, usually resulted in the division of the parish, and the triumph of error, besides the engendering of family and social feuds of long standing. The same difficulties, I found, resulting from a want of discipline in minor departments of church affairs

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In the mode of admitting and excluding communicants by the co-ordinate authority of the Pastor and the church, an unfavorable influence was created on all the parties. The division of responsibility lessened the efficiency of the Pastor; and the participation of the church in the examination of candidates, and the cognizance of offences, led to a narrow and limited standard of christian character, as well as to make the whole community a party in question of a confidential, and often trivial nature.

"But I must pass on to notice the occasion of the transfer of my connection to the Episcopal Church. My junior Pastor preached a series of sermons against the Episcopal Church. In these he labored to fasten upon that church the brand of formalism, and the corruptions of popery. The attack was wholly unprovoked; nor could any occasion for it be surmised, that was creditable either to his charity or his judgment. The Episcopal Church in that place was spiritually prosperous, and increasingly popular, and the clergyman was a man of the most elevated and consistent christian character, and never known to utter an unkind sentiment respecting his fellow christians. This attack proved unpopular. It was deeply lamented by the best friends of our Pastor. The discourses embraced many aspersions which appeared to have no warrant from the practical character of the Episcopal Church, and which indeed were so evidently inconsistent with it as to arouse suspicion of their truth, and led to an investigation of the facts.—Among a number of members of his church, some of whom are now clergymen in the Episcopal Church, I examined the subject. I became perfectly satisfied that the charges were groundless, and the attack an unwarranted and uncharitable one.—And what very much strengthened this conviction was the following circumstance. The friends of our Pastor who were most anxious to sustain him and to relieve him from the odium he had brought upon his character, called and requested explanation, indulging the hope that they had mis-apprehended his meaning. He disavowed any intention to injure or defame the Episcopal Church, and to satisfy them and the public, consented to publish his sermons. But what was our surprise and displeasure when we found that those parts of the sermons, which when delivered were most offensive, and which were extemporaneous, but which were

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fresh in the memory of the hearers, were *altogether omitted* in the published sermons. This, together with the unsatisfactory views of the sermons *as* published, laid the foundation of a disaffection in the congregation, which soon led to his dismission. There was another circumstance, also, which was, in the course of public inquiry on the subject of this manifest hostility toward the Episcopal Church, brought to remembrance in the past history of the two churches; and which was not a little favourable to the cause of Episcopacy. The older inhabitants recollected an effort to repress and discourage Episcopal worship by an attempt to enforce the payment of taxes for the support of this church on the Episcopalians who had begun to establish and support their own. In the course of this persecution several respectable members of the Episcopal Church were thrown into prison; and the son of one of them is believed to be now living whose christian name was given by his parents as a monument of the persecution of the father. He was christened by the name of Jail!

In the course of the inquiry which these circumstances excited, I discovered those peculiarities of organization in the Episcopal Church, which met and provided against the difficulties I had experienced as above narrated. I discovered in this church, in addition to sound doctrine, evangelical piety, and a truly catholic spirit, the appendages of a *liturgy* which furnished the worshipper with a medium of prayer that was appropriate, comprehensive, and spiritual, that afforded security against offensive additions, as well as defections and variation, and that established a firm bulwark against any extensive or permanent degeneration into heresy: a form of public worship that gave and secured to the Scriptures their deserved participation in the service of the Sanctuary; and a discipline which a succession of ages has proved to be an effectual preservation of union and subordination. I was not a little confirmed in my determination to make this the church of my choice by the approbation which intelligent and catholic spirited clergymen of my former communion awarded to the Episcopal Church; and among them, one who stands second to scarcely a clergyman in the land in point of influence, learning, and talent, assured me, that had he known as much of this church when he was a candidate for the ministry, as he now

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did, he should without hesitation have made his election to be an Episcopalian.

"In conclusion, I will only add that nearly fifteen years of intimate acquaintance with this church has strengthened my bond of attachment; nor have I to record a single circumstance of a seriously adverse character, save this,—that Episcopalians in general do not rise up to the lofty standard, and sublime spirituality of the Liturgy, Articles, and Discipline of their apostolical church.

Yours, &c."

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CHAPTER X.

THE TENDENCY OF EPISCOPAL INSTITUTIONS.

'Let me with light, and truth be blest;
Be these my guides to lead the way,
Till on thy holy hill I rest,
And in thy sacred temple pray."

It is not the towers and bulwarks of Zion alone that should attract our attention. Her *palaces* are not to be overlooked. *They* constitute no inconsiderable part of her splendor and glory. It must also be remembered that what constitutes their greatest charm and attraction, is the delightful fact that *God is well known in them as a sure Refuge.*

It is the presence of Christ, that gives to the church all its beauty and glory. The farther we proceed in our walk, the more reasons we discover for regarding the Episcopal Church with increased interest and attachment: and one of those reasons is, that we find written upon her every gate, and wall, and palace, and bulwark, and tower—"HOLINESS TO THE LORD." We find that God is in the midst of her—that Christ is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge. We wish, therefore, the reader to contemplate some facts which we shall spread before him, in relation to the tendency of her institutions.

Though the seal and impress of great antiquity are stamped upon all the institutions of our Zion, in many parts of the United States every attempt to establish the Episcopal Church is regarded as a movement hostile to the old and existing religious institutions of the land. The old religious societies, that have been in existence from the first settlement of the country, and which the pilgrim fathers planted here, are supposed to have undoubted claim to be ranked with the earliest forms of primitive christianity. And every departure, in relation to Church order, from those old landmarks is looked

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upon with suspicion, and regarded as innovation. The idea is also embraced that the introduction of the Episcopal Church into our old settled towns must tend to disturb the established religious societies, and agitate the community with increased religious controversy and dissension, which now exist to an extent truly hurtful to the best interests of christianity.

Having stated this objection to a friend who has had some opportunity to observe the results that flow from the introduction of the Episcopal Church into places where for some generations, other religious denominations have occupied the whole ground, he very kindly furnished me with the following very sensible article:

"In reference to the progress of the Episcopal Church, an objection has arisen, which demands serious consideration. It is this:

"'The Episcopal Church, even admitting she has many excellent features, cannot now be introduced without breaking up old societies, and sowing discord and strife.'

"An objection of so weighty a character ought not to pass without examination. If there is even a plausible ground for this objection, it deserves to be considered; and should it prove to any extent well-founded, it must be made to appear most conclusively that these evils are abundantly overbalanced by its great and good effects, before the establishment of this church can be hailed as a blessing.

"I have thus stated the case, because it will be allowed that the disturbance of existing societies, and even the occurrence of divisions is not, in itself conclusive against the introduction of religion under a new form. For if it were, then the Reformation would be without justification; and even the propagation of christianity itself among the heathen, originally or at the present day, cannot be defended. Admitting, then, that the interruption of existing associations, and the excitement of contentious feelings may ensue to a certain extent, on the introduction of a new church, without being conclusive against the utility or propriety of the measure, the objection is thrown upon other grounds than the bare fact of the existence of these evils. In order to sustain it, it must be shown that the Episcopal Church has in its own character a tendency to produce and perpetuate divisions and discord, and of

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course, is a false religion; or, that, being good in itself, it necessarily produces these evils by taking the work of the gospel out of the hands of others. And it is believed that the objection under consideration, in point of fact, rests upon one or both of these suppositions. Wherever a new Episcopal Church is established it encounters some objectors, who view it with a suspicious eye, as trammelled with the drapery of superstition, and possessing the form, without the power of godliness; and others, who assume it as a given point, that the old existing churches must be diminished in the exact ratio of the increase of the new ones. These, then, are the real questions at issue; and they are, happily, questions of fact that are susceptible of the clearest decision.

"Respecting the supposition of the formal and superstitious character of the Episcopal Church, it is deemed needless to institute an inquiry. The articles, and formularies, and discipline of this church, together with her general character and history, are open to public inspection; and we may safely refer the decision to that respectable rank which is awarded her by the common voice of Christendom. And we may, with confidence, refer all who entertain doubts respecting the principles and tendency of this church, to her living character. We ask them to scrutinize her influence, established and sustained in her true spirit and purity; and see whether the society which she controls is not elevated, sanctified, and peaceful to an extent that will sustain a comparison with her sister churches; and whether the opposition and strife, which in her progress she may have occasioned, be not incidental, innocent, and transitory.

"The writer of this, from his own personal observation, feels authorized not only to refer to the salutary influence of the Episcopal Church upon her own population, but to go farther, and maintain that wherever successfully established she exerts an elevating and inspiriting influence upon all existing denominations of christians. We are well aware of the fears and jealousies of old established churches toward the introduction of this church; and the same feelings naturally arise in relation to *any* new church of any denomination. The thought instantly arises that some of their communicants will withdraw, their congregation will be thinned, their own means of support will be drained, and their whole establish-

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ment be in danger of decay. And we have observed that these apprehensions are strong in exact proportion to their low moral condition, and sluggish inactivity: and they have reminded me of the poor parson who rejected the proposal of his parishioners to increase his salary, on the ground that as they were so slack in paying his present pittance, if they increased it he should lose the whole. Precisely similar is the apprehension of those languid and spiritless churches which remonstrate against the establishment of a new church, as if it were destined to draw from them their little remaining life, and build itself on their common ruin.

"Now, in all this, there is a misapprehension of the subject, and we undertake to affirm that however natural or plausible may be such fears, they are wholly groundless; and that the introduction of an Episcopal Church where other churches already exist, is attended with no such unfavorable results, but, on the contrary, is followed with decidedly beneficial effects upon the whole christian community.

"To explain this, it must be borne in mind that the number of churches of all denominations is never multiplied beyond the real necessities of the population of a place. In point of fact no such case can be pointed out. In proof of this, we may refer to New England, where the largest proportion of churches to the population exists, and point out places where there is one church for every five hundred souls, and yet they are all well attended and sustained, independently of the floating mass of infidels and reckless worldlings to be found in every place. Indeed, there is little danger that men will be found any where, who will carry zeal, true or false, so far as to incur the heavy responsibilities of a new religious establishment without the warrant of a sufficient population to sustain it conjointly with those already in existence. Allowing, then, that there is no danger of overburthening a place with religious institutions, it will be seen at once that no objection can arise against the introduction of an Episcopal church, except on the supposition of its engrossing an undue proportion of society. But this is a view which other denominations will not be disposed to take; and which, if just, and arising out of a real superiority in this form of christianity, not only removes the objection but supplies a powerful argument in its place. And yet the results, even in such a case, are not such

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The preceding statements verified by a reference to facts.

as the timid and the jealous might apprehend. For the intrinsic advantages of no denomination are so commanding as to secure for it a sudden and controlling ascendency; and the bonds of old associations are too strong and numerous to yield to any such consideration. There are so many prejudices to be overcome, so many local attachments to be sacrificed, so many family, social, and secular interests to be resisted, and so much hazard and sacrifice to be incurred in transferring connections from an old to a new church, that changes in the classification of society to any great extent, cannot, under even the most favorable circumstances, be suddenly effected. So that the materials employed in the establishment of a new church are fragments gathered from the churches in being, and from the floating mass of society. It does not seriously detract from the numbers of any; and then their partial losses are more than supplied to them all by the addition of new individuals who are drawn out by the common excitement, and also by the increased zeal and attention of their former adherents. In a word, a new church is a healthful stimulus to the cause of religion in all its interests; and operates in proportion to its own intrinsic excellencies to stimulate the sluggish circulations of the moral system, and to purge it of its corruptions.

These statements might be abundantly verified by reference to authentic facts. From many of a similar character, one is selected as an example. In a town of eight thousand inhabitants there were ten churches of various denominations. At the time of the introduction of a new Episcopal Church a large proportion of the people did not attend any place of worship habitually, and the congregations were generally thin. The churches were in a dilapidated state, and only one house of worship had been built within a century. There were less than twenty male communicants in the two most wealthy churches, and only three Sunday schools in the town. The new church, it was generally feared would be gathered at the expense, and to the injury of them all. The result is as follows:—Four new houses of worship have been reared within two years, and very extensive improvements made upon others. The several congregations have all been increased, the communicants greatly multiplied, the Sunday Schools augmented to ten; and a state of general prosperity and hap

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mony has succeeded to one of jealousy and strife. The change in the entire aspect of society is striking and happy, and its moral standard elevated. It is proper to remark that no increase of population, or change of circumstances has taken place in connexion with this change. It is attributable solely to the establishment of a new church, whose peculiar worship and discipline, united to piety and zeal among its members, rendered it a fit instrument in the hands of Providence to exert a reviving influence upon the christian cause. And there are many individuals in that place who now see this subject in a new light. They can look back with regret and shame at their short-sightedness in opposing and aspersing as an evil what God designed for good. May this example, which serves to exemplify our present subject, prove serviceable in promoting more liberal sentiments, and a more christian spirit between different denominations. Let it teach us that the prosperity of our neighbor is inseparably connected with our own. The advancement of the church in every department and branch is a common treasure, in which all partake, and in which all should rejoice. Let us leave it to a selfish world to act on the monopolizing principle, and to set up the interests of an individual in opposition to the welfare of the whole."

In corroboration of the position taken in the preceding article, is a statement of facts with which I have been furnished from another source. While passing through a particular section of one of the New England States, as from time to time I stopped at a small village, embosomed in the midst of a beautiful landscape, which the hand of the Creator had thrown around it, I was frequently led to notice and admire the neat and orderly appearance of every thing connected with the place. As I occasionally stopped in this village a day or two, I had an opportunity of observing the degree of interest that was felt in religious matters. I was at once struck with the apparent deep piety, fervent zeal and christian devotedness of the people. And it delighted me not a little to find that the Episcopal Church was leading the van in the benevolent movements of that christian community, and was regarded as second to no other church in point of spirituality. It was obvious that an unusual harmony and kindness of feeling, among different denominations of chris-

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tians, pervaded the whole community. I could not but feel a desire to know by what causes these delightful results had been effected. A request was made to a gentleman in the place for a brief sketch, detailing the principal facts connected with the establishment, and subsequent progress of the Episcopal Church in this place. The request met a response in the following communication, which cannot fail to awaken interest, and carry up the heart in gratitude to God:

"Rev. and Dear Sir,

"In compliance with your request, I will undertake to give you some account of the history of our church in this place, and the effects that have resulted from its establishment, I suppose that you are aware that the whole ground in this region has long been pre-occupied by other denominations. Till of late, they have known very little in relation to the Episcopal Church, and that little came from those who were opposed to it. The church was represented as holding many dangerous errors in doctrine, and as destitute of all spirituality —furnishing a mere barren form of religion, under the covert of which nominal professors, and those who were not disposed to set religion altogether at defiance, would seek shelter, and thus strive to soothe their conscience while they continued to slumber on quietly and undisturbed in their sins. There had been for many years in our village a Methodist and Baptist church. The service of the church was unknown here. At the time the minister, under whose faithful labors our church was established, first preached here, I believe there was not a single Prayer-book in the village. The state of religion was very low. Public worship was greatly neglected. The most intelligent and influential people in the place habitually spent their Sabbaths in absence from the sanctuary of God. A large portion of the inhabitants regarded Sunday as a holiday, and might be seen at all hours during the sacred day, engaged in visiting, walking the streets or lounging upon the wharves.

"It was under these circumstances that the idea was embraced of attempting to establish an Episcopal Church in this village with the hope of reviving religion. The attempt was looked upon with jealousy and suspicion by the old established congregations. Their meeting-houses were in a decayed and

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dilapidated condition, and no small difficulty was experienced in raising an adequate salary for their ministers. It was supposed that the establishment of an Episcopal Church would weaken these societies still more; and then too, there had been from time to time much jealousy and unkind feeling between the two religious denominations already established. It was supposed that the establishment of a third would increase sectarian bitterness and strife.

"In the face of all these difficulties the banner of the church was set up, and on it was written 'Christ crucified'—'Peace and good will to men.' The Lord was our helper, 'What was sown in weakness was raised in power.' That which at first was no bigger than a mustard seed, soon sprang up and became a great tree. The people who used to spend their Sundays on the wharves began to assemble around the herald of the cross. The wealthy and influential inhabitants of the village who had long neglected the courts of the Most High, began to say 'Let us go with them, and build a house unto the Lord.' A house was built—sinners began to inquire the way to Zion with their faces thitherward. From this moment, the moral and religious aspect of our village, began to exhibit signs of a decided improvement. At the consecration of our church, the Bishop in his sermon observed, 'that it had been often remarked, that where the Episcopal Church had been established in any place it had generally proved a blessing to the other religious societies. This was looked upon, at the time, as quite paradoxical: but in this place, it has certainly been realized; and the members of the other societies are now free to acknowledge it. Both the Baptist and Methodist congregations have increased, and are now in a far more prosperous condition than they ever were before. Their church edifices have been repaired, and they find little or no difficulty in raising all needful funds for the payment of their ministers' salaries, and other incidental expenses. They also now find it easy to do more for the religious and benevolent operations of the day, than formerly.

"In the mean time the Episcopal Church has held steadily on her way, pursuing a decided but unobtrusive course, enjoying at each advancing step, new and evident tokens of the approbation and blessing of God. Eight thousand dollars have been expended in erecting and enlarging our present

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church edifice. In the congregation there are more than a hundred families. They have become regular and attentive worshippers. And from these families, more than a hundred souls have professed faith in Christ, and been enrolled with 'the sacramental host of God's elect.' And these souls thus gathered into the Redeemer's fold, have been collected principally from among such as were before living in the neglect of public worship, and beyond the circle of the influence of the ministrations of the gospel. And now, harmony and kind christian feeling exist among all denominations. We have in a good degree *lived down* the prejudices that were once cherished against us. And the beneficial influence that has been exerted by our church on the moral and religious state of the town generally, is perceived and acknowledged by all.

Yours &c."

To corroborate the preceding statements, tne following communication is inserted from a clerical brother:

"Rev. and Dear Brother:

"I regret very much that the pressure of other duties, will prevent my giving that attention to your request which it demands. I rejoice truly that you are about to publish a work which will tend, both to remove the unfounded prejudices that exist against the church, and to enlighten the minds of some of our own communion who are too ignorant of the ways of our Zion. 'Be ready *always* to give an answer to every man who asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,' is a caution as wise as it is necessary; and may be extended in its application, not only to the evidence of our adoption into the family of Christ, but likewise to the grounds of our attachment to the church of our choice.

"The various works of this class, that hitherto have been attempted, are generally, either too abstract in their character for the great mass of readers, or too sectarian in their feeling, to be productive of real good. A work, therefore, of the kind proposed, breathing, not the spirit of sectarianism, (God forbid!) but a spirit of expansive christian charity towards all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot fail to be

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of essential service in promoting the interests of true religion. At the present time especially, such a work is absolutely necessary to satisfy the prevailing spirit of inquiry in relation to the church and her institutions. At no former period, in this country, has so bright a day dawned upon our Zion. The manifest increase in the piety and zeal of the members of her communion—the earnest and growing demand for her services in different parts of the land—the numerous additions to her ministry from other denominations—the astonishing and continued increase in the number of her candidates for holy orders—the multiplication and extending influence of her Theological Seminaries and other religious institutions—and last, though not least, the enkindling spirit of missionary enterprise, expanding itself over the broad earth and embracing within its influences 'every spot where lives a lapsed child of Adam'—all these are 'signs of the times,' so bright and cheering, that even the doubting may now exclaim—'the time to favor our Zion—yea! the set time is indeed come.'

"Again; when it is remembered that the church has reached her present state of prosperity, under circumstances the most adverse, it will require but little discernment to perceive in her the elements of perpetuity. The prejudices inseperable from the early political connections of this country with Great Britain—the unpleasant associations arising from the relation in which the mother church stood to the civil government—the reaction that was of necessity produced by the events of the revolution—the lax habits of many of the clergy—the worldly conformity that characterized too many of the remaining disciples of Christ—and the dangerous practice of admitting to confirmation individuals who gave no evidence of conversion to God; all these are causes which, in times past, have operated to the serious injury of the best interests of the church, and aside from that kind providence which has effectually preserved her through the medium of her peculiar organization, must have resulted in her final destruction.

"The careful observer, therefore, will not fail to perceive, in the history of the church, sure indications of her future prosperity. If notwithstanding the obstacles she has encountered, the hand of the Lord has still led her onward, *what may we not expect, when the growing spirit of piety*

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and of active and enlightened zeal shall characterize universally both ministers and people?

"It was remarked to me, a short time since, by a brother of the Presbyterian Church—'If Episcopalians had put forth years ago the piety and active efforts that are now manifested by many, yours would have been by far the largest denomination of christians in the country.' This remark is undoubtedly founded in truth. Such is the moral power that the church possesses in her organization; and such her unity of action, that the same degree of piety and zeal which has been manifested by some other denominations, would have carried her far in advance of them all in her resources, numbers, and moral influence.

"It has already been remarked, that we may judge something of what the church *might be*, from what she *is*, in spite of the serious obstacles that have retarded her progress. Even under all the prejudices that still exist in places where the church is not known, the attempt to establish her services rarely proves unsuccessful, if the truths of the gospel are plainly and faithfully presented through the medium of her ministry. The writer can cast his eye over a small sphere, where seven Episcopal parishes have been formed within three or four years, in places where the church was hardly known, and where scarcely an individual could be found that was interested in her services. The strong prejudices that existed at the first, soon yeilded to the conviction that they were founded in ignorance of what the church *really is*. In nearly all these parishes there have been revivals of religion —many souls have been gathered in of such as we trust shall be saved—and their *attachment* to the church is now as decided and observable as were their former prejudices. The great success which has marked the history of these parishes, is not to be attributed to any superior talent on the part of the clergy who labor in them, but simply to the fact that the *cross of Christ* has been faithfully preached.

To show how easily the strongest prejudices may be removed when the church becomes truly known, I will mention an instance which has occurred more particularly under my own observation.

In the latter part of the year 1833, the attempt was made to organize an Episcopal parish in the village of L——. At

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this time there was not *one* communicant of the church in the place or neighborhood—the strongest prejudices were entertained against her services by nearly all those who respected true religion; and humanly speaking there seemed but little prospect of success. In a few months, however, the power of Christ began to be manifested. The spirit of the Lord was poured out upon the people. A revival of religion unattended with any public excitement, but deep and powerful in the hearts of many, was given as an earnest, that the Lord was with us. From that time to the present, there have always been some individuals under serious impressions. The church numbers forty communicants, where eighteen months since there was not one. To these may be added many others, who will thank God through eternity that they ever attended on the worship of the Episcopal Church. A large, and still increasing congregation has been collected, and a commodious and beautiful temple has just been erected which is soon to be consecrated to the worship of the Great Head of the church. It is an interesting fact, that of the present number of communicants, most of them were strongly prejudiced against the church to which they are now so decidedly attached. I will mention an instance, in the hope that it may meet the eyes of some, who perhaps are judging as harshly of a church of which they are confessedly ignorant as once did Mrs. H——.

"At one of the meetings which the writer is in the habit of holding, for the particular instruction of those who are seriously impressed, Mrs. H—— was present, under deep concern of mind. It appeared that for a long time, she had cherished the hope that she was a christian, but at length perceived that her hope was built upon a wrong foundation Awaking to a sense of her condition, and realizing that she was yet out of Christ, she had now come to make the enquiry, '*What shall I do to be saved?*' Never was this inquiry made in true *sincerity* without receiving an answer from the Lord. Mrs. H—— soon found the Saviour that she sought, and with him that peace of God which passeth all understanding. At a proper time she was baptized, and was subsequently confirmed.

"These circumstances are mentioned that the reader may the better appreciate the following incident:

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"A short time after Mrs. H—— united with the church, she said to me:

"'I have something that weighs upon my mind and troubles me exceedingly. I have long been desirous of conversing with you on the subject. Mr. C——, I have injured both you and the church, and I wish to ask your forgiveness.'

"Surprised at this declaration, and at the evident confusion with which it was made, I knew not what to expect. Mrs. H—— explained:

"'Previous to the commencement of the services of the church at L——, I had never attended an Episcopal Church, nor did I attend the church here until some time during the last spring. The services were then entirely new to me. I was displeased with every thing I saw and heard. When I returned home I spoke my thoughts freely—said I never would again attend an Episcopal Church—that there was no religion in the church'—(Here she became evidently confused)—'and even reported that I did not believe you to be a converted man. I did not again attend the church for a long time. When I did, I became somewhat interested. This interest continued to increase until I attended the meeting which was so much blessed to me. You know the result—now can you forgive me?'

"It is needless to add, that it was not difficult to forgive a fault so ingenuously confessed, and for which such ample reparation had been made. The case of Mrs. H——, however, is not a singular one; and it is by no means impossible that this account may fall into the hands of some, who are now thinking and acting just as Mrs. H—— once did. If so, we would kindly say to them, *examine before you judge and be not over hasty in your judgment.* We also express the hope, that they may yet learn to appreciate a church, which in the land of our forefathers was the very *first* to take her stand against the errors of popery—which has sealed her testimony to the truth with the blood of her martyrs—which has sent forth from her ranks some of the most devoted missionaries of the cross, and whose learning, wisdom, and piety, have done more to fill the religious libraries of all evangelical denominations, than any other church upon earth. In saying this, we do not express a mere opinion, we state simple *facts*,—

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facts which may be found upon historical record, and which will be readily recognized by the intelligent of all denominations.

"If there have been found in the church, unfaithful ministers and ungodly men, the church is no more to be condemned for their delinquencies, than is the *religion of the gospel for the misconduct of some of its nominal professors.* If men would know what the church really is, let them go to her standards—her *liturgy*, her *articles*, her *homilies*. Examine them, search them, prove them. See if they do not breathe the very spirit of the gospel, and set forth in all their purity the simple doctrines of the cross.

"Let not the church be condemned for what *some have represented her to be*, but let her be judged and appreciated for what she *really is*. Alas! why should there be so much discord among brethren? Why so much of angry contentions, and striving about words to no profit, but the subversion of the hearers? One of the most *effective pleas* which the world offers for the rejection of the gospel, is the '*dissensions among christians.*' Let him, therefore, who wantonly assails the character of a christian brother, and still more, he who wantonly assails the character of a christian church, *remember* that if he succeeds in his object, he lends a most welcome aid to the powers of darkness. If those who name the name of Christ are reproached, the cause of Christ itself is injured. If one of the members suffer, all the members suffer with it. And why should the members of the body of Christ array themselves against each other? Has not each work enough for all its strength Is there not room enough for all? Are not the fields white for the harvest and loudly calling for the reapers? Are there not souls enough in all the darkness of sin, for whose salvation we may put forth our strongest energies? Are we not engaged in a common cause? Have we not a common enemy? Have we not all one master, even Christ, and one hope of our calling? Nay—are we not all one in Christ, and do we not hope to be one in his kingdom of glory? Away, then, with sectarian prejudices and party feeling! Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind; and while he is conscientiously attached to the church of his choice, and obeys the injunction of the Apostle, 'be ready always to give an answer

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to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,' let him do it with 'meekness and love,' 'not returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing.' And 'may the God of *peace*, which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us all perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ,' to whom be glory forever and ever.

Yours in the best of bonds

C."

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CHAPTER XI.

MINOR OBJECTIONS.

"How hard it is upon our church, that we, her professing members, will not do her the common justice of acting out her holy injunctions! Of what use are works of controversy in her defence, compared with the silent argument of a life built up under the holy influence of her spiritual discipline, and her sound and simple ordinances."

Records of a good man's life.

These pages will probably meet the eye of many who love the church, and duly appreciate her admirable institutions. Of them I would inquire—have we not, by our deadness and worldly conformity, been guilty of the suicidal act of doing more to retard the progress of our church, than all the opposition of her enemies?—Has not the spouse of Christ been wounded in the house of her friends. Did the light of holiness beam forth in one broad stream of lustre from the conduct and character of all who professed to love her, would not the clouds that now gather around her, and obscure her form and beauty in the eyes of many, melt away and disappear, like the mists of morning before the bright, glowing rays of the summer's sun! Oh! that Episcopalians would pray more, and live nearer to God, and seek to mount up on the wings of holiness to a closer communion with Him, and with the saints in light! Had they done this, their peace long since would have been "as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea." Had they done this, there would be now far less need of works like the present to disabuse the public mind of erroneous impressions in relation to the Church. But until we can be brought as a body to take a high stand, and become pre-eminent for holiness, we shall be obliged to send forth works of this sort, to entreat those who are ignorant of our doctrines, discipline and worship, to

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form their estimate of the Church from looking at her standards, rather than the lives of her unworthy members.

As this volume is designed more especially for those who have little or no knowledge of the church, I have thought it might be well to devote a chapter or two to the consideration of some minor objections, which not unfrequently are raised against the Episcopal Church.

To invest this subject with the more interest, I purpose to avail myself of a manuscript in my hands containing "*The reminiscences of a Missionary, while laboring to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ.*"

Who in surveying the edifices and public buildings of a town, or the various towers of some magnificent fortification, has not found some portion of the architectural group involved in partial obscurity by the position in which he happened to be placed? To see those particular parts to the best advantage—to understand their design, and see the relation they have to the whole, it is necessary to change one's position, and view them from another point. It is precisely so in one's walk about Zion. Some, who have walked partially around this city of the Great King, and who have considerable knowledge of several of its parts, have beheld other parts from points where they could not form any just idea of their beauty, design and propriety. We think that this manuscript will enable the reader to take a view of our Zion from a number of new points, where various colonades, arches, turrets and pinnacles, that may hitherto have been thought an incumbrance, will be seen to add greatly to the beauty, and glory, and safety of this blessed place, whose "gates the Lord loveth more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

Without any farther preliminary remarks, therefore, I shall introduce the reader at once to this *Manuscript.*

"Some of the happiest hours I have ever known on earth, have been passed amid the toils and privations of a missionary life. It is true that the missionary who goes out to labor amid the moral wastes of our land, encounters comparatively few of those hardships and dangers, which beset the daily path of him who goes to labor among the benighted heathen. Still the home missionary has his trials

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and he has his seasons of joy too,—pure, holy, uninterrupted joy!

"In looking back, here and there one of those happy seasons rise up to my view like so many lovely oases in the fountainless desert, furnishing a grateful object to the eye amid wide-spreading fields of desolation. Memory now lingers with fond delight over one of those bright spots in my past labors.—The time referred to, was an evening spent at the house of a friend, in the midst of a little group who had assembled to obtain more definite information in reference to the Episcopal Church. The circumstances which had convened them for this object were fraught with peculiar interest.

"In the fulfilment of the duties of my office as an ambassador for Christ, I had been led to visit a place where the population was dense, the people wealthy, and many of them intelligent and well-educated. This place was located in the centre of one of the loveliest and richest countries in the world. If the hearts of the people could have been touched, and drawn heavenward by a view of the finest and boldest scenery that ever stretched around the dwelling of man, or a display of the most luxuriant productions of nature, there would have been in this community no lack of grateful emotions to the Author of all good.

"But alas! amid this profusion of beauty and loveliness—amid this tide of blessing rolling around them, they forgot the source whence they came. These people full of enterprise and enlarged worldly views, and pressing on with diligence in every path of industry for the acquisition of wealth, were living in the entire neglect of Christ and his salvation. The gospel was seldom preached among them, and when preached, was usually heard with perfect indifference. As I before intimated, I had been led to visit this place in the discharge of my duty as a herald of the cross. Upon my first arrival I saw much to deplore, but I knew that the grace of God was mighty. I endeavored to "hold forth the word of life" among them. The effort was not in vain. In infinite condescension, the great and glorious God saw fit to accompany my humble and worthless labors with such a display of divine power, that many were awakened from the deep slumbers of spiritual

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death. And now one and another began to inquire, 'What must I do to be saved?' They were pointed to the bleeding 'lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.' But a short time had elapsed before twenty or thirty individuals were cherishing a hope of pardon through the blood of the everlasting covenant. I had not been particularly anxious to lead this community to become Episcopalians. My first wish was to bring them to Christ. Hence I had sought in every discourse, to hold him up to their view. My principal theme was 'Christ and him crucified.' And I found that the preaching of the cross was indeed 'the power of God unto salvation.'

"There existed however now a manifest reason why I should give some instruction in relation to the Church; for a number of persons were desirous to receive the seals of the covenant, and enter within its sacred enclosure. I proposed to meet these persons and give them an opportunity of making any inquiries they chose. We were kindly invited to the residence of one with whom 'old things had passed away, and all things had become new,' for the purpose of holding this interview. It was a Monday evening—an evening which I shall never forget. The hallowed spirit of the preceding Sabbath seemed to have diffused itself through all that day, and to have shed its sweet and sacred influence over the minds of all those who were assembled on that occasion. The whole company strikingly reminded me of what our blessed Saviour said,—'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.' They all gave the highest evidence that they were converted, and by nothing more than this—in that they were so humble and meek and docile—willing to be taught, and anxious to know what was duty. They were told that they ought not to enter any church without carefully examining its doctrines, understanding its discipine, and making themselves thoroughly acquainted with all its peculiarities and arrangements, and forming a calm and deliberate conclusion, whether these were in accordance with the word of God. They were reminded, that the Prayer Book, if attentivly examined, would show them the character of the Episcopal Church in these several particulars. And they were also assured that if they desired at this time to propose any questions in relation to the Church

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or Prayer Book, it would afford the speaker great pleasure to answer those questions.

"An interesting conversation immediately ensued. Mr. R—, the gentleman at whose house we were invited, was a shrewd and intelligent man. It seemed to be his desire to elicit all the information he could in relation to the church, partly for his own satisfaction, but principally for the instruction of those present. He thus commenced, addressing himself to me.

"'You know that till your late visit here, we were entirely strangers to the Episcopal Church—and I may also add, strangers to Christ. I hope some of us *now*, however, who were 'once far off, have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ.' We wish to unite ourselves to him in the bonds of the covenant. We think it no less a privilege, than a duty to connect ourselves with his church. We have no reason to doubt but the Episcopal Church is 'founded on the Apostles and Prophets,' Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. But for one, I must say, I do not yet see my way clear to unite with this church, though I am free to confess I am prepossessed in its favor. There are many of us that have read the service of the Prayer Book who yet do not fully understand the design of several parts of it. We want explanations in reference to several things. Here is Mrs. W—— who has several inquiries to make, I wish she would be free to state her difficulties fully.'

"I turned to Mrs. W—— and begged that she would feel at liberty to ask explanations in relation to any features of the Episcopal Church, which seemed to her to be involved in the least obscurity or error.

"In reply Mrs. W—— remarked, 'I see from the Prayer Book that the Episcopal Church holds to infant baptism. My mind is not fully made up upon that subject. In the event that I should connect myself with the Episcopal Church, and could not conscientiously see it my duty to offer my children in baptism, how would this affect my standing in the church? —could I still retain my membership?'

"'Undoubtedly'—I replied. 'You would not be cut off for declining to do what you conscientiously thought was not proper. The church inculcates the doctrine, that christian parents ought to give up their children in covenant, even as

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Abraham and Moses, and all the members of God's Ancient Church did theirs. The church goes on the ground that God has ever had a chosen people—and that these people were in covenant with him; that the covenant which he made with Abraham is still in force—and that this 'covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul, that it should make the promises of none effect.' And that under this covenant 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; for they are all one in Christ Jesus—and if they are Christ's then are they Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' The old olive tree which God planted when he made this covenant with Abraham, has not been dug up—is not dead. Some of its branches have been broken off, and new ones grafted in, but the old stock still remains. All who are made members of the christian church are described by St. Paul as a wild olive tree which is grafted in among the branches of this old tree, and with them partaketh of the root and fatness of the olive tree. And the Jews when they are again brought back from their rebellion and wanderings, and incorporated with the christian church, are to '*be grafted in again into their own olive tree.* Which shows most conclusively that the church to which the Jews formerly belonged, and that into which they will be introduced when they become genuine christians is one and the same.

"Now if the infant seed of the professing people of God were members of the church under the Old Testament economy, and the church under that dispensation and the present, is the same, it is proper that they should still be members, unless some positive divine enactment excluding them can be found. It was a positive enactment that brought them in, nothing short of a positive divine enactment can exclude them. If the ancient members of God's Church were permitted and commanded to have their children, while in infancy, grafted into this olive tree, and the members of this church now do not enjoy that privilege, where is the command or intimation that shows that they are to be denied this privilege? None can be produced. We must then conclude that this is still their privilege. How did the primitive church view this subject? Why, from time immemorial, all the world over, wherever the banner of the cross was set up—and parents came

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into the fold of the Redeemer, they brought their infant children with them, and placed them beneath the covert of the out-stretched wings of the covenant. And in doing this, they put themselves under solemn vows to train up their offspring for the service of God—to put forth every exertion to bring the minds of their children under the early influence of divine truth, looking unto Jesus for strength and assistance to enable them to accomplish this holy work. Take a single fact illustrative of this statement.

"A little more than three hundred years from the time of the apostles, lived Augustine one of the most pious, learned and venerable fathers of the christian church. And at the same period flourished Pelagius, a learned heretic. These men had a long controversy on the subject of original sin. They were unquestionably among the most learned men then on the earth, and had the best opportunity of knowing what had been in the christian church from the beginning. In the course of their controversy, the subject of infant baptism became incidentally alluded to, and both of them declared 'that the baptism of infants was a practice which had come down from the apostles, and was universally practised in the church; nay, that they had never heard of any professing christians in the world, either orthodox or heretical, who did not baptize their children.' From the first ages of christianity, children were brought into the church in their tenderest infancy to be reared as the servants and disciples of Christ.

"These are the views of the church on the subject of infant baptism. But if you, or any other member of the church, after having faithfully and prayerfully examined this subject, cannot view it in the same light, and feel that you cannot conscientiously bring your children to baptism, though we should think that you were in an error, still we should not presume to ask you to act contrary to your honest convictions of duty—and especially upon a subject in reference to which some of the best and holiest of men in modern times have entertained a diversity of sentiment.

"'This,' said she, 'is perfectly satisfactory. But there is another question I wish to ask. I was educated a Baptist. My early associations lead me to regard every thing connected with the usages of that denomination with peculiar veneration. Your ordinary mode of administering the rite of bap

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tism is not, I believe, by immersion. Were I to present myself as a candidate for baptism, at the same time telling you that I could not feel satisfied with any thing but immersion, what course would you take, on the supposition that you were satisfied that I was a fit subject for the ordinance?'

"'I would baptize you by immersion,' was the reply. 'This is perfectly admissable with us. I am acquainted with two Episcopal Churches, each numbering forty or fifty communicants, all of whom with two or three exceptions, were baptized by immersion. We think the mode entirely unessential. The candidate therefore is free to elect the mode that seems to him to be most in consonance with scripture.'

"'One question more, sir—Do you admit professing Christians of other denominations in regular standing in their own church to commune with you?"

"Certainly we do. At every celebration of the Holy Supper, the church affectionately invites all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, to come and kneel with her children at the altar, and there feed on the memorials of Christ's dying love. In this ordinance, she recognises no such thing as different denominations. She supposes all who have been baptized into the name of Jesus, and hold the great essentials of christianity, and are in the exercise of christian affections, as members of the church of Christ. Hence her language is, 'Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, devoutly kneeling.'

"'Well,' responded Mrs. W—— 'this is just as it should be. With all my baptist prejudices, I like the idea of an open communion; and I must say, as far as I have become acquainted with the Episcopal Church, there appears to me to be a broad platform, an extended area of common ground in this church, upon which real christians, though differing in some particulars, can meet and stand together.'

"I would not wish you to think too favorably of us' said I. 'The church in all her institutions and arrangements is unquestionably truly catholic. Would to God that all her members were equally so! Some of them alas! who are

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loud in their professions of attachment to the church, are lamentably lax in their ideas of christian character; and often just in proportion as their piety declines, do they become fierce in lauding every thing connected with the church, and exclusive and bitter in their feelings towards those who differ from them. There were people of this sort who infested the church in apostolic times, and they are described by St. Jude as 'spots in the feasts of charity—clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots—raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.' I hope there are comparatively few of these among us; and I trust there are others, and they not a few, who by their holy and consistent lives, and their manifest attachment and devotedness to the cause of the Redeemer, are the Church's epistle of commendation "written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God."

"Mr. R.——, who had been a silent and attentive listener, now took a part in the conversation.

"'What are we to understand,' said he, 'by the sign of the cross, used in baptism? Is not this a remaining shred of popery?'

"'By no means,' was the reply. 'For the sign of the cross was used in this ordinance long before the church declined from the simplicitly and purity of the primitive faith. St. Augustine and St. Cyprian both speak of this use of the cross and say, '*It was marked on the forehead, the seat of blushing and shame, that the baptized person might never blush, nor be ashamed of the disgraced cross of Christ.*' This custom originated in those early ages of the church, when the manner in which the founder of christianity was put to death, was considered a stigma on all who embraced the gospel, and when he who received christian baptism, exposed himself by this act to persecution and death. The cross was marked on the forehead of him who was baptized to show that all his hopes were now built on Christ crucified—to remind him that he must never be ashamed of the cross of Christ, but must be ready, if it became necessary, to go to prison and death, to prove his love to the Saviour. But it is well to understand that we do not consider this at all essential to baptism. In the language of one of the canons of the

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Church of England—'The Protestant Episcopal Church hath ever held and taught and doth hold and teach still, that the sign of the cross used in baptism, is no part of the substance of that sacrament; for when the minister, dipping the infant in water, or laying water on the face of it (as the manner also is) hath pronounced these words, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, the infant is fully and perfectly baptized. So that the sign of the cross being afterward used, doth neither add any thing to the virtue and perfection of baptism, nor being omitted doth detract any thing from the effect and substance of it.'* And you will also see, by looking at the service that there is liberty given to dispense with the use of the sign of the cross, whenever it is desired. For the grand principle upon which the Episcopal Church proceeds in all her various arrangements is to give her members all the freedom in reference to forms, and modes, and matters in themselves unessential, that is compatible with sound doctrine, and correct christian practice.

"'While we are upon this subject, allow me to inquire,' said Mr. R——, 'upon what ground the Episcopal Church observes the Saints' days and numerous other festivals, such as Christmas, &c: The Romish church, you know, makes much of these.'

"'It is true,' was the reply; 'and the Romish church also makes much of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But this is no reason why we should reject those ordinances. The observance to which you refer, we adopt solely on the ground of expediency. We do not think that Christ enjoined them, or that all christians are bound to adopt them. In like manner we do not think that Christ enjoined the observance of the first Monday evening in each month as a season of prayer for missions, nor that all christians are necessarily bound so to observe it. But we do think that it is very pleasant, and proper, and profitable to spend the first Monday evening of each month in this way—and that those christians who do so, will find it truly a season of refreshing from the Lord. So also, we think it pleasant, and proper, and profitble, to observe those christian festivals to which you have referred

* 30th Canon of the Church of England.

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and that a blessing will not fail to rest upon those who engage in those appropriate religious exercises with a right spirit. No possible objection can be made to our observance of the Saints' days; since we admit into the calendar the names of those only, whose history the Holy Ghost hath recorded in the sacred volume for our instruction. The church observes these days for the same reason that memoirs are written of good, and great, and distinguished men. Who is there that does not regard the biography of such men as Payson, and Brainard, and Martyn, and Leigh Richmond, as a great blessing to the world? These memoirs have done a vast deal for the cause of Christ. But surely Peter, and John, and Paul, in point of holiness and self-sacrifice, were not inferior to Payson and Brainard and Martyn. Are not the lives of Peter, and John, and Paul, then, worth contemplating? Is it not proper that the ministers of the church should, at least once a year, call the attention of the people to the contemplation of the holy lives and exalted piety of those first heralds of the cross, who did not count any sacrifices too great so that they could but make known to a perishing world 'the unsearchable riches of Christ?' The other festivals and fasts to which you refer, commemorate some event connected with the birth, life, or mediatorial work of Christ, thus furnishing a fit opportunity upon which to inculcate severally, and with increased effect, the great doctrines of the cross. Long experience has convinced us of the expediency of setting apart particular days, in which to contemplate the cardinal facts connected with the history of man's redemption. These annual commemorations are attended with signal benefit.—They make us more thoroughly acquainted with the prominent and most interesting gospel facts, and impress the remembrance of them more vividly upon our minds. By this arrangement we are sure to have the great truths of salvation every year systematically brought up before us. This is a very important consideration. As year after year, we contemplate on Christmas, the incarnation of the Son of God, with the kindred truths that stand connected with it; and on Epiphany, his manifestation to the Gentiles, and are thus led to pray over a dying world that 'the heathen may be given to him for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth

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for his possession'—then on Good Friday as we contemplate his bitter sufferings and death—on Easter, his resurrection from the tomb,—on Ascension day, his ascent from the top of Olivet to 'the right hand of God, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us'—on Whitsunday, the descent of the Holy Spirit to revive, refresh, enlighten and sanctify our hearts:—and finally, on Trinity Sunday, the sublime and glorious mystery of the 'three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, which three are *one*'—I say, as from year to year, particular days bring up the consideration of these great fundamental truths, we find our faith invigorated, our love to the Redeemer increased, our knowledge enlarged, and our souls refreshed.

"'But,' said Mr. R——, 'it is contended by those who object to the observance of these festivals, that they are greatly perverted and abused.'

"In what way?

"'Christmas, for instance, is spent in dissipation and riot, and opens a door for much wickedness.'

"To argue against an institution, I replied, from its abuse, would overthrow christianity itself. It will be well to observe, that this perversion of Christmas of which you speak does not occur under the sanction of those who religiously observe the day. They lament it. They lift their voice against it. They think the true way to rescue the day from the hands of the wicked is for all christians to unite in making it holy unto the Lord. The objection you state, if it has any validity, applies with equal force to our annual thanksgiving. This annual festival is observed by all denominations. The irreligious, however, make this a day of gaming and revelry, of drunkenness, profaneness, and of every excess. But notwithstanding all this, the people of God do not think that this is any reason why a day should not be set apart, in which they can go to the sanctuary, and offer up thanksgiving for God's abundant mercies. In like manner, Sunday in some parts of the world, and in some places in the United States, is made a day of feasting revelry and riot—a day in which more sin is committed than during all the other six days in the week; but no one ever thought that this furnished a good reason for abolishing the Sabbath. On the same principle, no valid argument can

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be urged against the observance of Christmas, because the ungodly turn it into an occasion of revelry."

"'The objections that have been noticed,' said Mr. R—, 'are not so serious as some that have been urged against different parts of the service. As I remarked a little while ago, we want information in reference to several parts of the Prayer Book. May I be permitted to inquire the reason, why you always begin the public exercises by reading some passage of scripture?'"

The answer to this inquiry, and the conversation that ensued, in relation to the service, as detailed in the manuscript, will be recorded in the next chapter.

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The sentences of scripture at the opening of the service.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MISSIONARY'S MANUSCRIPT, CONTINUED.

"Who but would follow, might he break his chain.
And thou shall break it soon, the grovelling worm
Shall find its wings, and soar as fast and free
As his transfigured Lord with lightning's form
And snowy vest. Such grace he won for thee,
When from the grave he sprang at early dawn of morn,
And led thro' boundless air, thy conquering road,
Leaving a glorious track, where saints new-born
Might fearless follow to their blest abode.—KEBLE.

How delightful is the thought, that there is an hour coming, when we shall no longer *see through a glass darkly*, but shall *know even as we are known*,—when every vestige of ignorance and error shall pass away, and we shall see all things in the bright mirror of eternal truth! Until that hour arrives, we ought, with all christian meekness, to seek earnestly the right path—looking up to God for guidance, and cherishing feelings of kindness towards those who may in some things dissent from our views.

We would ask the reader who has accompanied us thus far in our walk, to move on to another point, and take one or two more looks at Zion, before we separate.

It will be recollected that in the conclusion of the last chapter, in the conversation that was going on between the missionary and the little group around him, Mr. R—— had proposed a question in relation to the design of the sentences of scripture with which the service opens. The reply, as recorded in the manuscript, was as follows:

"We go to the house of God to worship Him. It is proper, therefore, that the first sounds that meet our ears should be the words of the Most High, reminding us *what we are*—

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vile worms of the dust, 'born in sin, and shapen in iniquity;' —*where we are*—in the presence and temple of 'the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, who dwelleth in the high and holy place,' 'and is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;'—*and what our special business is in this place*—to worship and adore that great and glorious Being, 'who is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.'

"These passages of scripture are intended to prepare our minds for the solemn worship of God. They are copied from the book of God, in order that their authority may be incontestable, and that the first accents to which the walls of the temple echo, may be, as it were, the voice of God himself, calling us to our duty.

"'That part of the service which follows these sentences —*the exhortation*, I believe it is called,' remarked a sunburnt, hardy looking man, who was a plain, substantial farmer—'that part of the service which follows these sentences, I like very much. It seems like a short, solemn discourse about God, before we attempt to speak to Him. Some how or other, this exhortation always brings up to my mind many things that are new. I think it must have a tendency to fix the heart and mind on God: It has that effect with me. The other day I was late at church, and did not get in till after this part of the service was over and some how or other, during that whole morning, I did'nt have any comfort at all in the prayers.'

"And if you examine the service a little farther, I remarked, you will see an evident propriety and fitness in the prayer with which, in our service, we first approach 'the throne of the heavenly grace.' It is in the language of *confession*—the language of a lowly and contrite heart. All true worshippers must come to God in the spirit of the Publican, who smote upon his breast and cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' That Publican might have adopted every sentiment in this first prayer of our service. From beginning to end it is precisely the language which a returning penitent would be likely to use, who desired to humble himself before his offended Maker, and longed to obtain pardon, and restoration to his favor.

While making these remarks, I observed one of the com-

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pany, a middle aged woman, whom I knew to be well educated and intelligent, apparently agitated, as though struggling with irrepressible emotion. Something that had been said seemed to have touched a tender cord in her heart.—There was a tremulous movement of the muscles over the whole system, and the tears began to flow fast down her cheeks. Addressing myself to her, I continued—

"Do you not, Mrs. M——, think that what I have said in relation to this prayer is indeed true?

"With hesitation and half-choked utterance, she replied,—'I shall never forget this prayer. It is engraven with the point of a diamond upon my heart. It was, Sir, while joining in this confession, crushed under a sense of my own utter unworthiness, and exceeding sinfulness, acknowledging to God that I was *a miserable offender*, and pleading with him to *spare me* and *restore me* to his favor *according to his promise declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord*—it was while confessing my sins along with the congregation, and urging my plea in the language of this prayer, that light broke in upon my darkened soul. The load of sorrow, which for days had weighed me to the earth was suddenly taken off. I could hardly contain myself in view of the wonderful love of God displayed in my redemption. And now it seemed as though all the promises were mine. Never did that Psalm before appear so to me in which we were soon called upon to join.—'O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things.' *Marvellous things!* indeed, thought I. David must certainly have had a realizing view of this wonderful love of God in Christ, to have described my feelings so exactly. In my case, it seemed as though there was a fulfilment of the promise in Isaiah —'And it shall come to pass before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.' Sir, God sent you here to preach to me before I had ever called upon him for salvation; and then, when through the influence of his Holy Spirit, I began to see my perishing need, and to cry to the 'Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world,' 'while I was yet speaking, God heard.' Indeed the language of that prayer was suited to my case, and never do I repeat it, but it stirs up my soul to the very bottom.'

"This unexpected burst of feeling, and noble testimony to

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this part of the service, produced a deep sensation through the whole group.

"Let us all take notice of this, said I, and record it to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

"'I do not wish,' said Mr. R——, 'to interrupt, or dissipate, by any improper inquiries, the state of feeling that now exists, but as we have come together to have our minds enlightened, I wish to inquire what we are to understand by the *declaration of absolution, or remission of sins, to be made by the Priest alone, standing, the people still kneeling*. Some of our neighbors think that this looks like the Roman Catholic Priest's pretended power to forgive sins.'

"How easy it is—was the reply, to misrepresent, and give false impressions! There is nothing in our church, that makes the slightest approach to that arrogant claim set up by papal anti-christ. None but God can forgive sins. His ministers may declare to the people on what terms God will extend pardon to sinners; and this is the whole sum and substance of *this declaration of absolution*.

"Consider the circumstances connected with the use of this declaration. The worshippers in the sanctuary having bowed before Jehovah—made humble confession to him of all their sins, and implored his pardoning mercy, the minister, as God's ambassador, now stands up, and declares on the authority of God's own word, 'that the Most High desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; and that He hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, *being penitent*, the absolution and remission of their sins.' And farther, that this God of love 'pardoneth and absolveth all those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel.'—And, therefore, they are affectionately exhorted to 'beseech Him to grant them true repentance, and his Holy spirit, that those things may please Him which they do at that present, and that the rest of their lives thereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last, they may come to his eternal joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Now is there any thing here that looks like the unscriptural and papistical doctrine of a pretended delegated power to remit sins? Is not all this in perfect accordance with the word of God? You might just as well condemn the use of the twentieth Psalm—*The Lord*

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hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion. Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice.—Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel. Nay, on the same principle, you would condemn every mode of blessing the people.

"No one could wish the declaration of absolution dispensed with, who considers its design and intention. While the people are on their knees, in the act of confessing their sins to the Eternal Jehovah, could the ambassador for Christ seize upon a happier moment, in which to declare to them the terms on which God is willing to be reconciled? And can such a declaration, at such a time, fail to fan the flame of devotion? At such a moment, to have our memories refreshed with a view of the boundless love of God in Christ,—how admirably adapted is this to lead the heart to turn with new emotions of wonder and love towards the great fountain of life and light! I would no sooner strike out this *declaration* from our service, than I would extinguish the lamps of a light house, in the midst of a mid-night tempest. What but darkness can gather around the soul, when we survey our exceeding sinfulness, and awful exposedness to the wrath of God, as we do in the preceding parts of the service! And was there no other object towards which we could turn our eye, the blackness of darkness would roll over us forever. But here just at this moment, the *declaration of absolution* comes in like a beacon light mid a night of storm; which, though it tells us of danger, still assures us that there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. It points to the cross of Christ, and bids the sinner look and live. And while he thus gazes on that blessed cross, and remembers all God's precious promises he feels the spirit of adoption stirring within him, and is prepared to lisp out his 'Abba Father' as the service proceeds, in the language of that delightful prayer of our Lord's—'Our Father who art in Heaven,' &c.

"The information conveyed in the Absolution, is in short, an answer to the inquiry, 'what must I do to be saved?' And this appropriate presentation of the gospel plan of salvation, to the worshipper, in a condensed view, admirably attunes his feelings to the sentiments of thanksgiving and praise, to which

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the service by its arrangement, calls upon him immediately to give utterance. And in view of God's wonderful love to dying sinners, and the astonishing provisions He has made for their rescue, his ambassadors, having directed the attention of the people to these, may well say to them who are the subjects of this transcendant mercy;

"*Praise ye the Lord.* And well may they instantly respond—

"*The Lord's name be praised.*"

"One of the company, after a short pause, looking over his prayer book which he held in his hand, remarked—

"'I like the mode, the church has of introducing the Psalms into the service. I think there is nothing better calculated to excite a truly devotional spirit than these Psalms.'

"Another remarked —'The reading of the scriptures, is, I think, an arrangement equally beneficial. By this means all are instructed in the word of God, and I know that there are a great many people who go to meeting, who seldom or never look into their bibles. If the scriptures are read in church they will in time know something about them.'

"In proof of the truth of your remark, I replied, I will state a single fact.

"In one of the New England States, some ten or fifteen years ago, there lived a very poor but pious woman. When she was near her end, she was visited by a Congregational minister, who was delighted with her evangelical views and simple hearted piety. There was one thing, however, that struck him as peculiar in this woman. Whenever he repeated any passage of scripture, if the quotation was not perfectly accurate, she would modestly correct him, by repeating the passage with *entire accuracy.* At length he said to her:

"My good friend you must have read the word of God very attentively to have treasured up such large portions of it in your memory.

"'No,' she replied, 'I never read a word in that blessed book—I cannot read.'

"'How,' said he, 'you cannot read! How then are you so well acquainted with the scriptures?'

"'I have attended the Episcopal Church,' she replied, 'from my childhood till within a few years— and all that I know of

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the scriptures I have learned from hearing them read in the service.'

"This fact speaks for itself. It needs no enlargement, by way of comment.

"Mr. R— then remarked—'Thus far, I am satisfied, but still there are other explanations that I must have before all my difficulties are removed.—I wish to know what you understand by this clause in the creed—*He descended into Hell.*'

"In answer to this inquiry, I wish to call your attention first to the *rubric*, or *rule*, giving direction in relation to the use of the creed, placed in smaller type just over it, which is as follows—'Any church may omit the words, *he descended into hell*, or may instead of them use the words, *he went into the place of departed spirits*,' which are considered as words of the same meaning in the creed.

"Secondly, I wish you to remember that the creed is a very ancient piece of composition. By some it is supposed to have been framed by the Apostles themselves, and thus to have derived its name—'*The Apostle's creed.*' By others it is supposed to have been so called from the fact that it is a brief and comprehensive summary of the principal doctrines which the Apostles preached.

"Thirdly, the particular article to which your inquiry relates, is founded on St. Peter's exposition of a passage in the 16th Psalm—'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.' This, in Acts II. 30, 31, Peter declares to be a prediction relating to Christ. 'Therefore, the patriarch being a prophet,' reasons the Apostle, 'and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul *was not left in Hell*, neither his flesh did see corruption.' You will see at a glance, that the same difficulty attends the exposition of this passage of scripture, as that of the article in the creed.

"But there is no real difficulty in either case. There are two words in the original Greek, which in our translation, are called by the same name, *hell*. One of these words, *Hades*, means the place of the dead, or 'a concealed place.' The other, *Gehenna*, denotes a place of punishment. Ac-

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cording to the notions of the Hebrews, *Hades* was a vast subterranean receptacle where the souls of the dead existed in a separate state until the resurrection of their bodies. The region of the blessed, or paradise, they supposed to be in the upper part of this receptacle; while beneath was the abyss of Gehenna, in which the souls of the wicked were subjected to punishment.*

"St. Peter uses the word Hades, as the mansion or country of the dead. He says that Christ's soul was not left there. You will bear in mind, that our Saviour had not only a human *body*, but a human *soul*, which existed in that body; and which was also mysteriously united with the divine nature. When, therefore, the Saviour was put to death, that human soul, like the soul of any other dead person, left the body, and went into the place of departed spirits. I suppose this is all that was meant to be taught in the creed. The grand design of this article was to assert that Jesus was really dead—that his soul had left the body—that his repose in the grave was not a mere suspension of life—that there was an actual severance of the soul from the body.† This being the fact, his resurrection would be a proof that he was divine.

"There are two things here, which I wish you to observe:—

"1. That by no legitimate construction, can this expression be made to favor the idea, that the souls of men after death are in an undecided state, still capable of repentance, or susceptible of being cleansed through some fiery ordeal, to which they may be subjected. This idea which is held by the Romanists and Restorationists, is utterly at variance with the word of God. 'As the tree falleth, so it shall lie.' Death closes the account, and settles the doom of every man for eternity. Perfectly preposterous, therefore, is the idea that Christ, during the absence of his soul from the body, went to preach to the imprisoned spirits, shut up within the dusky and adamantine walls of eternal woe.

"2. And again, you see in this instance, upon what liberal principles the church proceeds in all those matters that are

*See Robinson's Lexicon, p. 9.
† Bishop White's Lectures on the Catechism, p. 92. Also Pearson on the Creed.

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unessential. Does any church hesitate to use this article in the creed, '*he descended into hell*,' through an apprehension of its being misunderstood—that church is at perfect liberty to dispense with the use of it; and I am acquainted with several churches, who, on this ground, omit this clause altogether, in the use of the creed.

"There was an intelligent looking young man, who during all this conversation, had sat by himself in the corner of the room, and listened in silence. After the above explanation, a pause of a few moments ensuing, he modestly said,

"'You think there are good reasons for repeating this creed, on every occasion of public worship, I presume?'

"Certainly we do—was the reply. You will observe that this confession of our faith comes in, after the lessons or chapters from the Old and New Testament have been read. Our faith is founded on the word of God. The great design of the word of God from beginning to end, seems to be to call our attention to the following prominent truths—the existence of the Supreme Being, and our obligations to him—the fact that those obligations have been wantonly violated—the grand remedy provided for our rescue from merited destruction—and the means through which we can become invested with new capabilities of serving Jehovah acceptably. According to that infallible record, the medium through which all this is accomplished, is the incarnate Son of God. There is no salvation without faith in Christ's mediatorial work. The word of God was given to us that we might believe. We go to the house of God to worship Him, and obtain his salvation. The promise is—'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Having heard from the pages of the sacred volume, who Jesus Christ is—what his errand to our earth is—what God's purposes of grace in reference to us are—if we are disposed to believe all this—to take God at his word, and rest upon these assurances of His, with filial, child-like confidence, and declare to the world that this is our determination, salvation is ours. 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'

"The church wishes to give every one in the sanctuary upon every occasion of public worship, an opportunity to make this confession before God. She goes upon the sup-

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position, that upon every such occasion, there may be some sinners prepared for the first time to make their heart-felt confession to God, and obtain the blessing of justification.—And by inserting this creed in her daily service, she says to every unrenewed sinner that treads the courts of the sanctuary—to every sorrowing son and daughter of Adam, whose thoughts are turned towards eternal things—'Sinner, thou hast come here on important business:—by thy behaviour while within these walls, thou mayest close the open portal of death, and win a crown of glory. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* Here is a form of words in which thou mayest confess Him. Do it with thine heart, and Christ shall be everlastingly thine. Do it with sincerity—let these words come from thy inmost soul, feel their power, and rest thy all on God; and while thou art speaking, thy name shall be written in the Book of Life.'—All this is literally true. If those who assemble in our churches and repeat the creed, should always do it in this way, they would make that *confession with the mouth which is unto salvation.* But if these words are repeated as a mere hollow, heartless form, the repeating of the creed is worse than mockery in the sight of God. It is an attempt to 'draw near to Him with our mouths, and to honor him with our lips, while our hearts are removed far from Him.' Such feigned acts of reverence, unless speedly repented of, will not escape 'the damnation of hell.'

"I would also remark that it is proper and profitable for those whose faith has been long established, as from Sabbath to Sabbath they listen to the communications of God's word, to stand up and in the presence of God and men, declare their belief in the great fundamental truths of the gospel.

"These remarks seemed to rivet the attention of the young man, who had proposed the question which had called them forth. No sooner were they concluded than he remarked:

"'I feel greatly obliged to you for this explanation. I have some personal experience on this subject. The thrilling remarks of our friend, Mrs. M——, a little while since, in relation to the blessing she experienced in the use of a part of the service have encouraged me to attempt to relate

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the effect on me, of repeating the creed, the first time I did so. I was educated, as all these individuals here know, to regard religion as a delusion, and the idea of the divinity of Christ as a weak, silly superstition, coming down from the dark ages.—When you first came here and began to preach, I, like many others, went to hear you from curiosity; not because I had any belief in the gospel, or care for salvation. But, though reckless of myself, God cared for me. The words I heard were like barbed arrows to my heart. I saw and felt that I was a sinner. I resolved that I would seek mercy and pardon of God, but I determined I would do it independently of a Saviour. My proud heart recoiled from the idea of going to God through a mediator. I therefore tried to go directly to the Father, who dwelleth in light inaccessible. To Him I directed my prayers, with no mention of the name of Jesus. For a while my feelings seemed soothed. But when I began to look farther into my heart, and see how awfully guilty I was, I found no peace. The recollection of my past guilt was like the gnawing of the undying worm. I went about weary and heavy laden. I went to the place of worship. While there I could not bring myself up to the point of uniting in those parts of the service, where there was any recognition of the deity of Christ. My heart was yet too stubborn and unsubdued to embrace this humbling truth. Day after day passed away, and there seemed to be no rest for me. Every time I opened the word of God, something met my eye, that seemed to cut me loose from all my hopes, and send me adrift upon the dark sea of uncertainty.

"'At length, one Sunday morning, I opened the Bible at the first chapter of St. John's gospel. I began to read, and as I went on, I said to myself—If this book is true, and there is any meaning in language, Jesus Christ must be divine. The conclusion startled me. I said to myself—'That Jesus Christ is God, is a hard saying; I cannot receive it.' The conviction then instantly flashed upon me—'You will then have to give up the Bible, for this doctrine is clearly taught there.' The Bible I could not give up, for every agonizing throe of conviction that I was then feeling, told me it was true. I went to church. The chapters that were read, strikingly set forth the divinity of Christ. The sermon related to Christ

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as the only saviour of sinners. I went home wretched beyond description. My mind was like the troubled deep when darkness rests upon it, and tempests sweep over it. I went to my room and groaned for very agony. I could not pray. The hour of afternoon church arrived. I again directed my steps to the place of worship. As the service proceeded, this train of thoughts passed through my mind:—I am sure the Bible is true—the Bible clearly teaches, that we can be saved only through Jesus Christ, by believing on him as a divine Saviour. Now I want to be saved—why then do I not believe? The thought then flashed upon me like the winged lightning—*It is because you are an accursed rebel against God, and are unwilling to submit to His government.*—Then, truly, the iron entered my soul, and I felt my heart riven to the centre. I could not resist this conviction. I said—I am willing to do any thing if this load can be taken off—if I can only have the favor of God, and not sit forever beneath his withering frown.

"'This was just before the reading of the second lesson, which happened to be the chapter that contained these verses —'Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.' As I heard these words pronounced, the conviction instantly fastened upon my mind, I must *confess Christ before men*, before I shall ever obtain any light or peace. I resolved to do it upon the first opportunity. I determined now to join in the service.—Immediately we arrived at the creed. Here was a fit form of words in which to confess Christ. The thought had not occurred to me till that moment, that such was the design of the creed. I looked up to God and said, O! give me grace to confess thy Son. I went on with the worshippers, and for the first time acknowledged my belief in the incarnate Son of God. I felt that this was giving all up. In the very effort I made, I was brought to a state of submission, of which till then, I had been entirely ignorant. The effect was wonderful. It seemed as though I could at once take hold of the promises of God. The darkness which had hung over me, seemed at once rolled away. The gospel plan of mercy rose before me, invested with light and loveliness; and I said to

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myself, Is this what I have loathed and rejected? I looked at Christ. How altered he appeared! I remembered his office, and the errand on which he had come to our undone world. And as I thought of all His love to dying sinners, he appeared to me *chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.* I said—Is it possible that this is the Saviour, whom I have scorned and disowned? What a mercy is it that God did not hurl me down to the nethermost hell, while my proud knee refused to bow to Jesus, and my guilty tongue, to confess that he is Lord of all! Sir, I have been happy since the first time I repeated the creed. I love the creed. It is full of light and illumination to my mind. It honors Christ—it makes us own him—and he tells us, that if we do, he will own us at last.'

"This little narrative was listened to with no ordinary interest; for this young man, in the few times I had met him, had been remarkably reserved. On this occasion, his tongue seemed unloosed, and he spoke almost as though inspired. An impression, deep and strong, had evidently been made upon the minds of all present, and for a few moments we all remained silent."

I must here be permitted to interrupt the narrative of the Manuscript for one moment, to relate a fact in relation to the repeating of the creed, which was stated to me by a clergyman, who had unquestionable vouchers for its truth. I requested him to give me the statement in writing, which he did as follows:

"A gentleman of the highest standing in society in one of our first commercial cities, had regularly attended an Episcopal Church, until time had begun to whiten his locks. Of his private and personal character, it might be said as truly as of the young man whom Jesus loved—'but one thing thou lackest.'

"But at length, as he was bearing his usual part in public worship, and audibly responding the service, when the minister came to the creed, and began with the solemn declaration, *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth*, his mind was arrested. The thought rushed into his heart with a power and brightness similar to that which accompanied the voice that spake, and the light that shone upon Saul—*Do I believe?* A conviction of his

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unbelief fastened upon him, and he found no rest until he enjoyed peace in believing."

But to return to the Manuscript:

"Mr. R—— at length began to move his chair, and give indications that he was about to propose another question. 'There is another expression in the creed,' said he, 'that I should like to hear explained. The expression is clear enough to my own mind, but some of our friends here have I presume, heard it referred to, as a proof that there is a perfect agreement and fellowship between the Episcopal, and the Romish Church. I allude to the clause, *I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.*'

"Never was there a greater piece of arrogance, I replied, than the claim of the Romanists to be the *Catholic Church.* While they have, in a measure, appropriated this name to themselves, many of the Protestant churches seem to have lost sight of what is comprehended under this term. *Catholic* means *universal, general* and metaphorically, *liberal;* the reverse of narrow-minded and bigoted. The question is frequently asked—In what light do Episcopalians view christians of other denominations. Here is our answer—*I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.* This church is not made up of one denomination—but of the professing christians of all denominations, who have *one Lord—one Faith—one Baptism.* As the ocean, washing the shores of different and distant countries, takes different names as it becomes formed into bays and harbors, where it touches the borders of those countries, yet after all, those bays and harbors constitute parts of the ocean: So in like manner, though the church of Christ in different quarters of the globe, assumes different names, and is formed into separate denominations—yet after all, these constitute parts of the great Catholic Church. 'All those belong to the visible church,' says the pious and judicious Hooker, 'who are signed with this mark—'one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.' In whomsoever these things are, the church doth acknowledge them for her children; them only she holdeth for aliens and strangers, in whom these things are not found. *If by external profession they be christians, then they are of the visible church of Christ;* and christians, by external profession, they are all, whose mark of recognizance, hath in it those things which we have mention-

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ed.'* Or to use the language of Archbishop Secker, 'Christ's Church is the whole number of those who believe on him. How much soever they may differ in some opinions or practices, yet they are one in all things essential. How wide soever they may be dispersed throughout the world, they shall at last be *gathered together unto him*.† We can judge only according to appearances: and therefore, to us, all those must be members of Christ's Church, who make a visible profession of being christians. The first quality ascribed to the church is, that it is *holy*. In *outward profession*, the whole visible Church of Christ is holy; separated and distinguished from the rest of the world by acknowledging his holy laws, and using the means of holiness which he hath appointed. But in the inward sense, and the only one which will hereafter avail, they alone are members of this holy church, who by the help of those means do really improve themselves in piety and virtue, becoming *holy in all manner of conversation, as he which hath called them is holy*. 1. Pet. 15. The Church is said to be catholic. The word *catholic*, applied to the Church is no where used in the scriptures, but frequently in the early christian writers, and it means *universal extending to all mankind*. The Jewish Church was not universal, but particular, for it consisted only of one nation. The Christian Church consists of every kindred, tongue, and people. Rev. 5, 7. The Catholic Church, then, is the universal church, spread throughout the world; and the catholic faith is the universal faith, that form of doctrine which the apostles delivered. Rom. 6, 11. What this faith was, we may learn from their writings contained in the New Testament, and *we can learn it with certainty no where else*. Every church or society of christians that preserve this catholic or universal faith, accompanied with true charity, is a part of the catholic or universal church, and because the parts are of the same nature with the whole, it hath been usual to call every church singly, which is so qualified, a catholic church. And in this sense *churches that differ widely in several notions and customs, may, notwithstanding, each of them be truly catholic churches*‡.

* Hooker's Eccles. Polity, Book 3, Sect. 1
† Numb. xvi. 3.
‡ Secker's works, vol.iv, p. 327 328, 329.

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"Such are the enlarged and liberal views of Episcopalians in reference to the Catholic Church. I am perfectly aware that when men's minds are prejudiced, they can see evil in every thing. I will here relate a little incident in illustration of what I mean—

"A clerical brother, a most amiable, worthy, and heavenly-minded minister of the Episcopal Church, went on one occasion to M—— to preach. The people there in general, knew very little of the church, and had very strong prejudices against it. On the occasion referred to, a large congregation came out to hear the Episcopal minister. Among the number was one of some influence in the community, who prided himself on his superior powers of discrimination, by which he supposed he could detect the slightest departure from the standard of evangelical correctness. After the service had ended, this man and a neighbor of his, walked home in company with each other.

"'And what did you think of the Episcopal minister?' said his neighbor.

"'I did not like him at all,' was the reply.'

"'And why? He surely gave us a genuine gospel sermon.'

"'Yes: but his prayers were all wrong.'

"'In what respect?' enquired the neighbor.

"'Why,' said he, 'he prayed for the *Universalist Church*, as intimating that he was on good terms with them, and he also declared in his creed which he repeated, that he believed in the Catholic Church, that mother of abominations, seated on the seven hills of Rome.'

"Thus you see, this man's ignorance and prejudices in conjunction, invested the Episcopal service with tremendous attributes of evil. In the '*prayer for all conditions of men*,' it is said, '*we pray for thy Holy Church universal*.' This had been interpreted into a prayer for the Universalists. And the article in the creed, of which we have just been speaking, '*I believe in the Holy Catholic Church*,' was regarded by his oracle of orthodoxy, as proof positive, that Episcopalians perfectly symbolized in church matters with the Papists.

"I trust the remarks that have been offered, by way of elucidating the expression 'Holy Catholic Church,' have not only shown the propriety of the expression, but have fixed your attention upon the interesting fact, that in the belief of

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Episcopalians, the Catholic Church comprises not simply one denomination of christians, but the whole body of believers throughout the world. All true believers are united to Christ, their spiritual head: they are built on the same foundation—they embrace substantially the same faith—they receive the same sacraments—they are called in one hope of their calling—they are in the most important and essential things, of one mind—they acknowledge Christ as their Lord. In fact, they have *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*, and therefore they are virtually one people, and constitute one church—the Catholic Church.* Yes, Episcopalians do believe in *the Holy Catholic Church*, the mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people.'† And they also believe in *the Communion of Saints.* What a delightful subject is here brought to view? If all true believers constitute one body, and are united to Christ their spiritual head, they must all have one spiritual life flowing from him. 'And,' as Leighton remarks, 'this communion holds not only on earth, and in heaven apart, but even betwixt heaven and earth. The saints on earth make up the same body with those already in glory.'‡ This idea is beautifully expressed in one of our hymns.

> 'Angels and living saints and dead
> But one communion make:
> All join in Christ their vital head,
> And of his grace partake.'

"What an argument does this consideration present to lead us to cultivate a kindly intercourse with our fellow christians? What expansion, and elevation of thought does this whole subject impart?

"Let us follow out the ideas contained in these two clauses of the creed, '*The Holy Catholic Church*'—'*The Communion of Saints.*'

"Every baptized follower of the Lamb, who with us, acknowledges Christ 'Lord of all,' of whatever name, or nation he may be, is a christian brother, belonging to the

* See Bp. Pearson on the Creed, 2d vol. p. 236—240, Also Archbishop Leighton, vol. 2. p. 312.
† Communion Service of the Episcopal church.
‡ Leighton's works, vol, 2. p. 312.

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Catholic Church, and one whom we should bid *God speed*. What a great and glorious family does the universal church consist of! A part of its members are already in heaven, holding the harps of glory in their hands! A part of them are still in the wilderness, journeying onward amid toils, and trials, and weariness, steadily *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith!* This is the company which you propose to join. Another portion is to be gathered from those pagan lands, over which now broods more than midnight darkness. By and by, when God '*has gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him*—

> 'When the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
> Their Saviour and brethren, transported to greet,
> While the anthems of rapture, unceasingly roll,
> And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul'—

When on Zion's glorious hill, shall stand the whole number of God's elect—when the last blood-bought sinner of our race, shall have turned to God, and have '*come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven*', then, if we are so happy as to be among that number, we shall begin fully to understand how much meaning is conveyed in these terms, '*The Holy Catholic Church*'—'*The Communion of Saints!*"

Here the manuscript abruptly terminates.

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CHAPTER XIII.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

In the waste howling wilderness
The church is wandering still,
Because we would not onward press
When close to Zion's hill.
Back to the world we faithless turn'd,
And far along the wild,
With labor lost and sorrow earn'd,
Our steps have been beguil'd.
Yet full before us all the while,
The shadowing pillar stays,
The living waters brightly smile
Th' eternal turrets blaze.—KEBLE.

THE reader will distinctly perceive that it has not been the intention of the Author in these pages, to represent the Episcopal Church as absolutely free from every imperfection and defect. It *has been his intention* however, to show, that this church possesses at least so many of the essential elements of the primitive church set up by the Apostles acting under the express authority of Christ, as clearly to indentify it with that church—and therefore to warrant us to conclude and affirm that this is truly the church of Christ. How far he has succeeded in making out this point, the reader must judge. His object has not been to *un*-church other denominations but simply to show, that the Episcopal Church, is built on the holy hill of Zion. If others can from the testimony of scripture and the light of ecclesiastical history, establish the same thing in reference to the ecclesiastical organizations with which they are connected, he has no controversy with them. On this subject he would say, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

The author is of the opinion that it is the duty of christians

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to look to *themselves*—and not to their *neighbors*—in relation to this matter; to be principally concerned with the question, whether *they themselves*, not whether *others*, are going right.

It has been the Author's earnest desire, and that which he has sincerely sought in all *this walk*, to follow the guiding pillar of eternal truth. That pillar of heavenly fire, he desires from his inmost soul to follow, guide him where it may. The only exhortation that he would address to the reader, who has accompanied him so far on this walk, is *Come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord.* Every other light, will prove but the sparks of our own kindling—a mere *ignis fatuus* that will lead us astray—a momentary blaze that will go out when we most need its illumination. Let us then *walk in the light of the Lord.* Let us follow the honest convictions of our understanding. Let us not be afraid to see the truth—nor be unwilling to embrace it. Upon this one point, let us be fully satisfied, that we have verily entered the gates of Zion, and are numbered with her blessed inhabitants. Having examined the matter and looked at it with honest and sincere intentions to know the truth—and being fully persuaded that we have verily entered the city of the great King, we can look up to him and say

> "Thy guardian fire—thy guiding cloud,
> Still let them gild our wall,
> Nor be our foes and thine allow'd
> To see us faint and fall.

But alas! with whatever church we are connected, I fear we shall see much to humble us—much to lead us to confess in deep grief and bitterness of spirit,

> "Too oft within this camp of thine
> Rebellious murmurs rise;
> Sin cannot bear to see thee shine
> So awful to her eyes."

We wish to detain the reader a few moments longer to take one more look at Zion before we separate.

It has always appeared to us, that among the most unerring marks, that ought to characterize that body which Christ left to represent him on earth and to extend his kingdom over our sin-desolated world—are unity and love. The

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very office which christianity proposes to perform for the proud unregenerate sinner, is to bring him to submission to the divine government—to transform his nature, to infuse into his heart the mild gentle spirit of Christ, and to fill his soul with love to God and his fellow men. The object which christianity places before every converted, transformed sinner, is to renounce himself and live and labor for the glory of God.

We should naturally suppose that a company of men, thus renewed in their minds, and acting upon such holy principles would be a band of brothers—among whom there would be but one heart, and one mind. It was so in the early ages of christianity. The pagan persecutor, who trod the disciples of Jesus down into the dust, was often forced to exclaim in wonder and admiration—'*see how these christians love one another.*'

It was the design of Christ that this spirit of unity and love should ever characterize his followers. Hence in his last intercessory prayer, the earnest petition was offered up "*that they all may be one.*"

But alas how often have those various religious bodies claiming to be the church of Christ—how often have they exhibited to an unbelieving world, scenes of division and strife—and of angry contention, which have scared and driven far away the angel of peace.

In our view there have been two causes that have contributed to this sad result.

1. The one has been the admission of men into the fold and to a participation in the counsels of the church who were not under the influence of true godlinesss. The influence of worldly men who have identified themselves with a party, and breathed into the church the spirit of the world, has done a great deal to promote strife among brethren. Such men have been able to marshall talent, and wealth and worldly influence on their side—to carry their measures by the wisdom that is from beneath, and overrule the counsels of meekness and love.

2. There is another cause however which we think has often interrupted the peace and harmony of religious bodies—*a defect in their organization.*

We shall not attempt to lay our hand on those defects—

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but simply call the attention of the reader to a few features in the organization of the Episcopal Church which appear to us eminently calculated to promote christian unity.

Christian churches of undoubted apostolic origin may be temporarily agitated and disturbed with internal commotion. This was the fact in relation to some of the churches which the apostles planted—even during their lives. Those disturbances however were transient. They did not lead to disunion and dismemberment.

A season of temporary union and harmony, or of division and strife in any church therefore, does not furnish *data* from which to predicate any thing with certainty in reference to the apostolic character of that body.

We do not say however, that a continued state of harmony with only slight and occasional interruptions, would not be a strong presumptive evidence in favor of the apostolic spirit and character of any church:—and that on the other hand, constant strife and division—leading to disruption and dismemberment—does not indicate *the absence of the elements of* that religious compact which Christ formed, and which he designed should continue to the end of the world.

All that we mean to say, is that a temporary season of harmony or of discord in any ecclesiastical body does not furnish a safe criterion by which to judge of its apostolic character.

It is not therefore upon any present indications of harmony through all her borders, that we found an argument in favor of the apostolic character of the Episcopal Church. We believe that in her very organization, she possesses some of the essential elements of *peace* and *unity*. Much has been said and written of late in reference to christian union. A volume has recently appeared upon this subject.

The Author remarks,

"That aside from the cardinal doctrines, of man's depravity and guilt in the sight of a holy God—the way of his pardon and restoration to the divine favor through the blood and mediation of his son—the necessity of regeneration through the influence of the Holy Spirit, there is not perhaps any truth of the Bible more important to the prosperity of the church, than the doctrine of its *unity*."* And a writer reviewing

* Van Dyck on Christian Union.

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this volume, in detailing the evils of religious sectarism and the spirit of party in the christian church remarks,

"It eats out the heart of personal and family religion—it divides families and convulses communities—it saps and undermines the due influence of the ministry—it encourages the spirit of insubordination and misrule—it alienates and embitters against each other the hearts of christians—it strengthens the hands of the ungodly, and loosens the loins of the church—it encourages the contempt of the blasphemer and hardens the heart of the infidel—it wastes and misdirects the energies of the church—fills Christendom with mourning, and covers it with dishonor—whilst it abandons the unenlightened heathen to their own forgotten and unpitied miseries. Sectarism is one of the master devices of satan. It goes farther than any other influence, perhaps, in keeping real christians from that fullness of growth and vigor to which without it they might attain; stands directly in the way of the conversion of the multitude in christian lands; presents christianity to the heathen in a mutilated and degraded form and fritters away or paralizes the energies of christians for evangelizing the world."*

There can be no doubt but that the divisions that prevail among christians, are a great hindrance to the spread of the gospel and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, both at home and abroad. And it is encouraging to know that christians of different denominations begin to see and deplore the evils that flow from these divisions—that the enquiry begins to be agitated—"How shall the dismembered parts of the christian family be again united into one body?"

At such a time it is natural to look around and see what branch of this family has the broadest substratum of christian principle—the largest aggregate of the elements of union—the widest area of common ground, on which these scattered forces may rally and form themselves into one great holy compact, with Christ for their head—and the glory of God and the establishment of his kingdom on earth, the great object for which henceforth they shall live and labor.

Now we feel confident, that the reader who has accompa-

* Review of Van Dyck on Christian Union by Bp. Smith.—Literary and Theological Review, p. 509.

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nied us in this walk, will not he be startled when we say that we believe, that it will be found that the Episcopal church rests upon this substratum, and occupies this area.

To illustrate the grounds of this belief, we will briefly advert to a few facts:

1. It has been made obvious throughout this volume, and especially in the last chapter, that the Episcopal church is truly *catholic*; that she does not *un*-church those who do not enter the fold, at the door at which she is stationed; so far from this, that she considers all those as belonging to the church of Christ, who have been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, and have professed faith in Christ—and who acknowledge Him as their Lord. Perhaps some may require more evidence on this point.

I am not ignorant that we are sometimes accused of an exclusiveness, that would lead us to deny to other denominations, the honor and consolation of being an integral part of the Christian church.

In answer to a charge of this kind, the editor of the Churchman, a religious periodical, advocating the sturdiest church views, remarks—

If this be regarded as "an exposition of the views maintained by the Protestant Episcopal Church, we discard it in every line and letter. The Episcopal church makes no comparison of her own ordination with that of other churches, and of course, neither asserts its superiority, or its exclusive excellence. It is not true that she restricts her ministers from communing with others at the Lord's Supper. It is not true that she un-churches other denominations, or denies them the honor and consolation of being an integral part of the christian church. We trust, therefore, that no such ungrounded prejudices as to the exclusiveness of the Episcopal church, will prevent any from examining those claims to superiority, which her clergy, as the clergy of every church are in consistency and good faith bound to do, unanimously advance in her behalf: a superiority—viz. in purity of doctrine—a superiority in scriptural warrant for her government—a superiority in approximating, in all her usages, the model of the Primitive church; a superiority in organization which enables her to throw off extraneous influence, avoid distractions from without, and evolve her energies simply from the word of God

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within; and a superiority in fine, in the delicate task of combining the antagonist forces of the *vigor* which conquers the world and the *stability* which retains the conquests. Such claims of superiority the clergy of the Episcopal church do make in her behalf, and the clergy of all other denominations ought, if they are honest men, to make these or equivalent claims in behalf of the church to which they respectively belong.*

Bishop Burnet, in commenting upon the 23d Article of the Anglican church, and in adverting to non-Episcopal churches, established in various parts, remarks—

"We are very sure that not only those who penned the Articles, but the body of this (the Episcopal) church for above half an age after, (the organization of those churches,) did, notwithstanding those irregularities, (the want of Episcopacy) acknowledge the foreign churches so constituted, to be true churches, as to all the essentials of the church, though they had been at first irregularly formed, and continued still to be in an imperfect state. And therefore, the general words in which this part of the Article is framed seem to have been *designed on purpose not to exclude them.*"

Burnet, as is well known, is a standard expositor of our Articles, and this very work is recommended to our students of Theology by the House of Bishops. In perfect keeping with this, are the remarks of Bingham, who is another standard writer of the church—and who in reply to a charge of exclusiveness, says:—

"In all their disputes with the Papists, these churchmen, (who were accused of being excessively bigoted,) never require more than these two Notes of the church. They say with Bishop Andrews—"that though Episcopal government be of divine institution, yet it is not so absolutely necessary, as that there can be no church, nor sacrament, nor salvation without it. He is blind that sees not many churches flourishing without it."†

The senior Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States, the venerable Bishop White, in a charge delivered to his diocesan Convention, in 1831, remarks—

"In connexion with a determination to sustain the Episco-

* Churchman for August, 1835.
† Bingham's Folio Works, vol. 2. p. 727.

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pacy, it is not impossible, that in the different grounds on which it may be rested by different advocates of it, there may ensue a cause of disunion. We shall be safe in this matter, in proportion as we continue on the ground taken for us, by the reformers of the Church of England. They unequivocally affirmed the apostolic origin of the Episcopacy, as a fact; and then, as a suitable consequence, they ordained, that there should be no other ministry within their bounds. The same is the limit within our church. If any should carry the subject beyond this, it is private opinion; and cannot be acted on, in proceedings regulated by the rubrics and the canons, without hazarding the issue intimated: and the same might be the effect of the extending of these provisions, with the view of accomplishing such a project."

And again, in 1834, adverting to this subject, he expresses the following sentiments:—

"With deep solicitude for the sustaining of the integrity of our system in this matter, there is not perceived the necessity of carrying it to the extreme of denouncing all communions destitute of the Episcopacy, as departing from the essentials of the christian faith, and as alien from the covenants of promise. Let it be borne in mind, that the object is to inculcate the duty of continuing the subject in the institutions of our church, on the ground on which it has been transmitted to us by the Church of England. While in her Articles and in her Ordinal, there has been regarded the precise medium here advocated, contemporary with the enactments of them, there are uncontradictory facts, which are their safe expositors, and undeniable evidence of the sense of the reformers. If there should be any among us who make larger conclusions from the same premises, it is matter of private opinion, and not to be obtruded as the determination of the church. The deliverer of the present charge, in the exereise of the like freedom of opinion, is rather disposed to adopt the sentiment of an able and learned Archbishop of Canterbury, (Dr. Wake,) where he says, in a letter to an eminent foreign divine, 'far from me be such an obdurate heart, as that because of this defect,' [meaning the want of the Episcopacy,] 'I should say to some' [meaning of churches correct in the faith] 'that they are to be cut off from our communion; or I should pronounce with over ardent writers

among us, that they have no valid sacraments, and are scarcely Christian.' Many English prelates might be cited to the same effect. But let it suffice to name a man, than whom no other has been more respected in the mother church, and who lived in the age next to that of the reformation, the Rev. Richard Hooker. The said profound divine, in reference to churches not Episcopal, holds the language—'This their imperfection I had rather lament; considering that men oftentimes, without any fault of their own, may be drawn to want that kind of regimen which is best, and to content themselves with that which either the irremedial error of former times or the necessity of the present, hath cast upon them."

That in the view of the Episcopal church, all are regarded as members of the Catholic church, who are by profession christians, and hold the essentials of christian faith, may be made farther evident by another quotation from Hooker.

"All those," says he, "belong to the visible church, who are signed by this mark, *one Lord—one faith—one baptism.* In whomsoever these things are, the church doth acknowledge them for her children: them only she holds for aliens and strangers in whom those things are not found. *If by external profession they be christians—then they are of the visible church:*

"And christians by external profession, they are all, whose mark of recognizance hath in it those things which we have mentioned.*

Archbishop Secker, also declares, as we have seen—

"Christ's church is the whole number of those who believe. The catholic church, is the universal church spread throughout the world—and the catholic faith is the universal faith—that form of doctrine which the Apostles delivered. Every church or society of christians that preserves this catholic or universal faith, accompanied with true charity, is a part of the catholic or universal church. *And in this sense, churches that differ widely in several notions and customs, may, notwithstanding, each of them be truly catholic churches.*†

No church that did not entertain these catholic views could have any prospect of seeing the dispersed members of

* Hooker's Eccles. Polity. Book 3. sect. 1.
† Secker's Works. vol. iv. p. 327, 329.

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Christ's flock gathered within its pale. This is one feature in the Episcopal Church which we think opens a wide door for christian union. It is a noble trait in her organization, and one which cannot fail to exert a wholesome influence in promoting peace and harmony within her own borders.

2. Another feature in our organization promotive of peace and harmony, is the principle that there shall be agreement in essentials—and freedom in unessentials.

We fully believe there is no greater obstacle in the way of christian union, than the drawing out the "standard of faith into all the more minute ramifications of metaphysical and polemic theology."

There are unquestionably many points of doctrine, not at all essential to salvation, in reference to which christian men, governed by the purest and holiest principles, will differ. The great secret of keeping the bonds of union unbroken therefore, unquestionably, is, adherence to the principle—*agreement in essentials and freedom in unessentials.* This principle seems to have been rigidly adhered to by the original framers of the 39 Articles. In proof of which, I will venture to affirm, that there is no human standard of faith extant, to which so many evangelical christians would be found so ready to subscribe, as to that contained in the 39 Articles.

3. As a consequent necessarily resulting from the foregoing principle, there is recognised among us *the right of discussing freely* those various doctrinal points, upon which there is disagreement.

So far from this being productive of discord, it is the only expedient by which men can be held together in the bonds of union. To suppose that thousands of minds, having a great diversity of association—and having been subjected to different habits of discipline and training, would embrace on all minor or metaphysical points the same stereotype opinions, is absurd—and to suppose that men whose great study is truth, should not be allowed the privilege of expressing freely their views in relation to truth, is equally absurd.

The great matter is to have this right understood and recognized—then there will be no alienation of affection or bitter denunciation among brethren though they widely differ on some points. That this right is fully recognized by our standard of faith might be made evident by a reference to

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the 17th Article, which was constructed with an evident design to meet the views of two classes of men who thought differently in reference to the doctrine of the divine decrees. As Bp. Burnet remarks—"the church has not been peremptory—but a latitude has been left to different opinions."*

I am well aware, that though this principle is inwrought into the very texture of our ecclesiastical organization, there has been at times an unwillingness among us to recognize it. And this has led to nearly all the controversies that have agitated our Zion, since the first establishment of the Episcopal Church in America. One of the great grounds of controversy between high and low churchman is swept away the moment this principle is admitted. And we have reason to believe that there is such an increase of light and love in our borders, that this *conceded right* will be no more questioned.

The determination which all seem to have come to, is to speak out their own sentiments plainly and allow others to do the same—and not to cease to love their brethren, or to call in question their piety or their attachment to the church, though in some points of doctrine, or in reference to some questions of expediency they differ from them. Under the operation of this principle, forbearance will be exercised—brotherly love will prevail—and the angel of peace will stretch her Heavenly wings over Zion. It is our happiness to witness just such a state of things at this moment, through the whole length and breadth of our church—"Peace is within her walls and prosperity within her palaces." May the olive branch be long seen on her walls to apprize all who pass by, that we are the children of the Prince of Peace.

In expressing the preceding sentiments to a brother of another denomination in relation to the importance of the allowed right of free discussion upon points in which brethren may disagree in order to secure union and harmony in the church—and requesting his views on the same point, he very obligingly favoured me with the following communication:

My Dear Brother,

I desire to express to you my hearty assent to the views which you have presented in regard to the right of discussing the doctrines of religion in the church. In my view no

*Burnet on 39 Art. p. 230.

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right is more sacred, or to be guarded and secured with greater vigilance, and even self-sacrifice, and no subject is more important to be well understood in our times, than this. The right of discussing any subject, and all subjects, is a right which I think is conferred on us by the God that made us; is indissolubly connected with moral agency and accountability, and is a right which no human power can wrest from us. It is our birth-right as the creatures of God endowed with reason, and responsible to him; and it is a right growing out of the very genius of our religion, distinguishing it from all others; and growing out of our civil institutions distinguishing them from all the dominations of tyranny.—It is needless to attempt to prove this. Every man feels that as a creature responsible to God, he has a right to investigate for himself every doctrine which is proposed to him as a matter of belief. He owes it to himself, and to God, and is bound to do it by all the fearfulness of the account which he must soon render; and by all the importance of the bearing which it may have on his own welfare. It is secured in this country by the very genius of our republican institutions. Every thing here supposes, that whatever may affect the public welfare, may be, and should be subjected to the test of calm and thorough investigation. And the institions of our country are safe no longer than this principle is preserved. It is the very genius of the Protestant religion, and the moment this is abandoned there is a vast retrocession toward the dark regions of the Papacy.

There have been really but two systems of measures proposed on earth for the guidance and governance of man; and all governments, civil and ecclesiastical, can be characterized as they partake of the elements of one or the other of these systems. The one is that which proposes to govern man by mere authority; the other proposes a government that is based on conscience and reason. The one appeals to divine right;* or the venerableness of antiquity; or a claim derived from a long line of ancestors—illustrated in the books of heraldry,

* By "*divine right*" as used in this article, the writer does not mean that authority and warrant, that can be claimed for any ordinance or institution of the gospel which truly emanates from God, and which can be shown to be derived from him from his word; but that imaginary right, supposed to be derived from the Supreme Being, for which no reason can be shown, nor warrant produced, save its existence and antiquity.

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but inglorious in all that gives dignity to human nature; the other depends on an appeal to the understanding, on an enlightened public sentiment, on laws, opinions, and usages that commend themselves to mankind as best and true. The one looks upon all discussion of its claims as unauthorized and dangerous; the other courts investigation, believes that discussion will only extend the triumphs of truth, and advance the just ends of government and of human happiness. These two systems divide the world. The defenders of the divine right of kings are on the one side, the friends of liberty are on the other. Those who believe that the power of despots is derived to them from an ancestry whose blood is in some mysterious manner of purer and more elevated material than those of the common mass of men, are on one side; those who believe that all men are by creation equal, and endowed with equal rights, and that all just authority must emanate from them, are on the other. In civil matters, this contest is going on between despotism on the one hand and liberty on the other. The great struggle of these times is on this point; and in Europe the alarm at the progress of freedom, and the tottering of the throne, and the mighty agitations of the people, show how vital is this struggle in regard to the welfare of men.

The same struggle has been carried on in the church of God. On the one hand, there has been a claim set up from unbroken tradition, and the effort has been to secure this claim from the intrusion of those who would examine it, and make it so sacred to the eyes of men as to deter them from its investigation. This is the claim of the Papacy. On the other hand, it has been contended that all those pertaining to the church may be subject to open and candid investigation, that truth will bear inquiry, as gold will bear the burning heat of a crucible; that every man has a right freely and fully to canvass every opinion, and that if a doctrine cannot be defended by the word of God, and by sound reason, it is not to be defended by authority, but it is to be abandoned. This is Protestantism—and yet the spirit which has governed the advocates of the papacy, and the dogmas which have defended the thrones of despots, have found their way even into the protestant churches; and it seems almost as if after the toils of centuries on this subject, the whole matter about the right of

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free discussion is to be re-examined in our times. There are men who have power in church and state; and conscious that they cannot maintain it by argument and thought, they rest the claim on authority, on divine right, on tradition, on the fact that their opinions have been held "time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." Hence even Pro testant churches are divided into two great parties; one claim ing the right of authority—the other claiming that *every thing* may be freely and fully investigated. In the Presbyterian church, the Episcopal,* the Baptist, the Methodist, there are these two parties, and though the enquiries are brought to bear on different points of doctrine or order, yet the spirit is the same. It is a struggle between those who would settle every thing by *authority*, and those who claim the right freely and fully to examine all subjects that may be brought before the mind. Investigation will always be resisted by the lovers of absolute power; and freedom of opinion will be denounced by those who are conscious that their claims rest on authority, and tradition rather than truth. There is ultraism in all modes of administration but that of God; and strange as it may seem, and absolute as are his commands, they are all based on reason, and all suppose the right, and the obligation of investigation in his subjects.

There is much reason to apprehend that there will be a necessity that this entire subject should undergo a thorough inquiry in this land. Claims of a high order are set up by those who are opposed to free enquiry; and alike in church and state, there is a strong party disposed to resist those claims.

I am deeply persuaded that there can be no true and permanent peace and prosperity in the church or state unless these claims are admitted. The human mind is free; and must be independent and unshackled. Its powers may be imprisoned, its energies shackled for a time, but they will, as they did in the Reformation, ultimately burst their bonds. That peace which is obtained as the peace of freedom, is false and delusive. It is the quietness of the slumbering volcano; or rather of a power more terrible when roused than the volcano; of mind, active, mighty, independent; of mind that will

* We hope the time is at hand when this can no longer be affirmed of our Zion.

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burst all shackles but those of reason, and conscience, and the authority of God. There can be no permanent union where this right of enquiry is not conceded; there can be no permanent danger but to error and tyranny where it is.

In a special manner, I think, we are to regard the christian religion as favourable to freedom of enquiry. Every where its true spirit has fostered candid investigation; every where it has been retarded where this has been opposed or unknown. And it seems to me that this single principle would do more than all other things at present to produce harmony in the churches. Unity of heart, and purpose is needed as the grand thing; and this may exist where there may be a very considerable difference in religious opinion. On the great doctrines of the christian faith, christians are agreed. The essentials of religion are held by them all. If those doctrines are held there is still a large territory over which the mind may range, and which may be regarded as legitimate fields of enquiry, and where there may be allowed an honest difference of opinions. Union of feeling may exist; union in place; union in the purpose of converting the world to God. And every step which is taken towards this state is a material point gained in my judgment towards that great consummation which is decreed—the union of all christian hearts and hands in turning a revolted world to God. As contributing to this, I pray that a divine blessing may rest on your labours; and that your views may have a speedy and entire circulation through the christian church.

Your affectionate brother in the Lord.

One object we had in asking the writer of the preceding article for his views, upon the particular point which he has discussed, was, that the reader might see in what light this point presented itself to one of another denomination, having no connection with the Episcopal Church. We believe it will be found upon examination, that the Episcopal Church has taken the proper ground in relation *to the right of discussion;* and that it will be found that harmony is to be preserved not by suppressing the honest sentiments of our hearts, but by stating them frankly, and allowing to others the same privilege.

In the preceding observations that have been offered in relation to christian union, we would not be understood as ex-

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pressing the opinion, that if there ever is again established *one outward form of christianity* on this earth, it will be the precise form in which the Episcopal Church at this moment stands before the world. Just so far as she possesses the essential features of the church of Christ she must remain immutable, and no farther.

And I would here submit to the consideration of the reader, whether there be not much wisdom, in the remark of a very good and holy man.*

"If differing denominations of christians are ever brought to *strive together for the faith of the gospel*, it will be by their first *uniting in the government*, whatever they may decide it to be, which God *has set in his church*."

It is not impossible that after all, this will be the point upon which the whole matter will turn—that when christians are agreed upon this, all other repellencies will give way, and the whole mass will mingle into one consolidated body. It is not impossible but this, at last, will prove the great principle of attractive affinity, which will draw together and hold in sweet and delightful union, all the integral parts of the now divided church of the Redeemer.

I have no doubt however, if christians are ever thus brought together, all denominations will have to give up something.

A writer who undertakes to account for the existence of different denominations on the ground of utility, remarks:

"There is room for correction and revision in every denomination, and a fund of practical wisdom among the different sects for each sect to avail itself of, in the improvement of its own system. Hitherto prejudice and self-sufficiency have prevented the inter-communion of experience and practical improvements; and it has been a sufficient reason for not adopting a salutary practice, that it was the peculiarity of some other denomination. But when this foolish and criminal selfishness shall sink and disappear, as the tide of holy love rises in the hearts of christians, each denomination will be as ready to avail itself of the discovery of others, as philosophers now are to avail themselves of each other's discoveries in philosophy and mechanism. And when this shall come, and I trust it is near at hand—then the end which God

*Bp. Griswold.

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saw from the beginning, may begin to disclose itself. Then we may perceive that all his people, in all their different wanderings, have been employed by Heaven to explore different fields, and to bring in, each their treasures of experimental knowledge, to assist in building in the most perfect practical manner, the universal temple in which all nations shall worship God; and happy is that denomination which, in the light of that trying day, does not in some respect suffer loss; and thrice happy that community of christians, which shall bring in, as the result of its researches the greatest amount of gold and silver and precious stones, and the least amount of wood and hay and stubble."*

We have introduced these remarks not for the purpose of adopting the theory of this writer in relation to the design of Heaven, in permitting the various denominations of christians to exist, but to fix the attention of the reader upon this one fact, that if there ever be again on this earth *one outward form of christianity* it will in all probability be some what different from any that now exists. With all our churches there will doubtless be found some hay, wood and stubble—but if we mistake not, there will be found a large amount of gold and silver and precious stones, in the organization to which we have been directing the attention of the reader in this volume, so large an amount indeed, that in point of essentials, it will continue the same organization.

We must now take leave of the reader. If in this walk about Zion, he has seen any thing to cause him to lift up his heart in gratitude to the Great Builder of Zion's towers and palaces and bulwarks—if he has seen any thing to prompt him to look with kindlier feelings upon the members of the Episcopal Communion, let him TELL IT TO THE GENERATIONS FOLLOWING.

* Spirit of the Pilgrims, vol. 1. p. 360.

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